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P O E M S

BY

T. J. POWYS.



L O N D O N :

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LTD.

1891.

ERRATA.

The aspirate ‘ in the second line of the Greek motto to the
Dedication should be ’

Page 20, line 4, *for* is his *read* in his

Page 20, last line but one, *for* they *read* thy

Page 69, line 1, *for* in all *read* all in

Page 82, line 11, *for* fancies *read* Dreamland’s

Page 91, line 14, *for* looked *read* look

Page 114, line 13, *read* In stocks within a pound impounded
with

Page 126, line 9, *for* smiled *read* grinned

[The frontispiece is a photograph by Mayall, reproduced
by a process, as to which we are informed that its one defect
is, that it produces spots and blotches supplied by itself.]

Οὗτος ΚΡΑΤΙΣΤΌΣ ἐστ' ἀνὴρ, ὦ Γοργία,
Ὅστις ἈΔΙΚΕΪΣΘΑΙ ΠΛΕΪΣΤ' ἘΠΪΣΤΑΤΑΙ βροτῶν.

MENANDER.

Dedicated

to the memory of
a great Poet,

Sir HENRY TAYLOR

(author of *Isaac Comnenus*, *Edwin the Fair*, etc.)

who wrote

“*The world knows nothing of its greatest men,*”

and is himself already almost forgotten.

PREFACE.

—*sera, tamen respexit*—

Some of the pieces now published were printed (a very limited number of copies) many years ago, but not widely circulated, or advertised, or offered for review.

It may be pleaded, as an apology for offering them to the public now, that although much encouragement, such as may be implied from the interesting and characteristic letters* of Walter Savage Landor, photographed for the embellishment of this little book, was accorded to the then young author, he has not hastily acted upon it, or even made mention of it : he had, in fact, absolutely forgotten the existence of the most

* The postmark of Mr. Landor's letter dated " Bath June 2. " is BATH JU 2 1857 ; that of his undated one BATH JY 3 58.

interesting of those letters until recently, having laid them entirely aside for more than a quarter of a century.

Mr. Landor, it will be seen, readily sanctioned any use of his testimony ; but the author, who had become much engaged at the English Bar (not under the name which appears on the title-page), almost at once decided not to avail himself of the permission ; and thenceforth subordinated all thought of higher things to professional duty, and the “ low ” material objects “ enjoyed ” during many years of “ grind ” at uninteresting briefs, with happy immunity from any dangerous imputation of a weakness for literature, and from the deadly suspicion of poetry.

The unfinished dramatic poem “ Uriel,” to which Mr. Landor more particularly refers, has never been continued, notwithstanding his kind request for “ the sequel ;” and it appears to the author to require so much revision, that it is not reprinted now.

There is a temptation to mention a letter from Charlotte Brontë, as interesting and characteristic as Mr. Landor's, and to much the same effect in its favourable criticism, and that Mrs. Browning expressed her opinion in terms which to cite would naturally argue fatuous vanity and a total want of "sense of proportion."

The only other name ("such names mingled!") of a too gracious critic which shall be paraded is that of Mr. A. Hayward; who spoke (wrote) of assured success (*sed non ego credulus*), and who was not chiefly known as a critic too much disposed to express enthusiasm at all like that of Elizabeth Barrett Browning or Charlotte Brontë.*

* If there may be a single exception to the rule that no living critic or authority shall be mentioned, the illustrious name of James Anthony Froude must adorn this page, in recognition of the encouragement which he also volunteered both in the distant days referred to and since.

June 1

Sir, It is only now,
when I am come to the
conclusion of the grand
Poem, Urie, that I find my
way in order to pay my
thanks to the author
I ^{observe} ~~find~~ your name as
printer I pray you to
present to the most
powerful poets of our
country and our times
this faint expression of
admiration and gratitude
Walter Savage Landor

Bath. Jan 2

Sir, My enthusiasm for
poetry, I thought, had
passed away. Yours
has revived it. When
I had carefully read it, I
gave an account of it to
my friend Torder, lately
editor of the Examiner
I have always kept
myself apart from the
inhabitants of the literary
world - and indeed have
little to do with any of the
others. Solitude is my
delight, and I do not
permit it to be interrupted
I seldom read a column
of a newspaper. The
plague and famine at
Sebastopol, and the impurity
of those who brought them
on, have disheartened me

Even the glorious work
of my friend Napier
took only a few hours
daily from me, extorting
a few sighs and curses.
Your kind offer to send me
more copies I must decline
not knowing how to bestow
them worthily, but it embold-
-ens me to request the
sequel in its season.

Believe me, Sir
with high respect and
admiration,

Yours obliged
Walter Savage Landor.

My dear Sir,
You are quite
at liberty to state
my opinion of your
prose; wishing its
all success;

I remain faithfully
yours
Wm Landon

46 Montagu Square W.
June 13. 1857

Si

Thank you for the apology for not
having earlier acknowledged the volume
you have kindly sent to me. - but I
have been absent from town, and only
found your packet yesterday

I send you the note with
much cordial admiration of

'And, that I anticipate
no ordinary pleasure from its
perusal - and I beg you
to believe me, with renewed thanks,

Very respectfully yrs

John Foster

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ERRATA.

The accent ‘ in the second line of the motto to the Dedication
should be ’.

Page 126, line 9, for *smiled read grinned.*

STARLIGHT.



Millions of worlds and ages,* spread in light,

Space, time*—depths undivined—

Alike unfathomable, co-infinite.

And where the Mind ?

And where, oh ! where the Heart ?—for what the rest

If that in vain we crave ?

All is but measure of a wider waste,

A deeper grave.

* “ We penetrate alike through the boundaries of time and space ; we measure the former through the latter . . . the light of remote heavenly bodies presents us with the most ancient perceptible evidence of the existence of matter.” —Humboldt, *Cosmos*, vol. i., p. 144-5 (vol. iv., p. 350).

SAPPHO.

She has girded her lyre, yet burning,
 To the throb of her bosom deep,*
 With the pressure of arms of yearning ;
 And she poises her on the steep.
 There's a wavy white robe descending ;
 And a note like a sad song's ending.

It is gone—the gleam, the singing :
 There is nothing near or far
 But a swan through the blue air winging
 Away to the western star,
 And a last note fleeting, dying,
 With the white swan starward flying.

* Βαθύκολλος.

FOR CL—

Was there no presage? Had my restless heart,
 That stirred, I think, as with some dreamy sense
 Of dawn as yet unrisen, had it then
 No prescience, as we stood, that Julian morn,
 By the deep-flowing river, dark, strong Dec,
 Deep, but unresting, rapid, like the flow
 Of passionate thoughts that seek *that other* heart,
 That union, as the river seeks the sea?—
 No prescience of the new and better life,
 The world made brighter in the light than then
 Dawned from dark eyes, that speak the vivid mind
 With thought's mute eloquence, and speak the soul
 Of gentleness and goodness?

With that day,

So darkened once,* and then, as years lagged on,
 Still dawning dark on memory, with that day
 Began new life, which never since has waned
 From that first light, and shall not set; or if
 To set on this world's dim and circumscribed
 And ever near horizon, shall but set
 In hues prophetic of another day
 And brighter, hues reflected from afar.

* 15th July, 1868.

That summer day, that holiday, we went
 Among the hills, and all was fairy-land.
 That day !—how oft have I recalled it, straying
 Among the mountains and the mountain streams'
 Love-murmuring waters, as they poured their tale,
 Sped through the flowery woodlands with the pulse
 Born in their lofty source ! how oft looked back,
 Far back, and then far forward, as with eyes
 Unsealed, and touched with holy euphrasy,
 Heart stilled and soothed, and mind attuned by heart,
 Looked back with calmest scorn on all that once
 Had angered at the ingrate and malign,*
 Remitting, pitying all*—full well content
 That they, unwitting, blindly shaping ends
 Of ever-present Providence, had wrought
 My best deliverance, and, estranging me,
 Had thither turned my steps where I had found
 One that redeemed and blessed, won back, relumed
 That faith in goodness which had been belied,
 That loving trust which had been so betrayed ;
 One that by all that friend on earth can show
 Of leal devotion, purest tenderness,
 Has taught how votaries see and how revere
 Their friends in Heaven, whom they as saints invoke ;
 Has stablished in a sternly judging mind
 The boundless blessing of a boundless faith,
 And made my heart a shrine that shall endure
 Beyond the ages that outlast the hills.

* “ O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
 That I am meek and gentle with those butchers.”

—*Julius Caesar*, Act III., sc. 1.

That word "*Beyond!*"—a mystic sound, a spell—
 The far "*Beyond*"—it haunted me, a child.
 I gazed *beyond* those hills, that bounded then
 My world, and in the unexplored beheld
 Another world—far other than my own,
 Or all my own, a world within my mind.
 And after lapse of long and troubled years,
 I stood with her upon the mountain height,
 My childhood's false horizon, and we watched
 The summer day, that there had dawned, go down
 Beyond the further west, in kindling hues
 That seemed to glow with love, and gleam with hope.
 And well content was I with silent thoughts
 That followed life and light beyond the bourn
 That Fancy fixes in its faithless awe
 At Time's departure, followed Love and Hope
 Beyond that western sky, the grave of day ;
 Full well content, and more, to think that she
 Then (for I go) alone, yet not alone,
 Shall watch the setting suns of future days,
 And take the parting light into her heart,
 Pledge of its sure revival in the east ;
 And breathe the summer morn among the flowers,
 Among the voices of the birds and brooks ;
 And stray in autumn evening in the wood,
 And find the green blade and the earliest bud
 Glance through the white shroud of the re-born year,
 That stirs in earth at whisper of the spring ;

And muse in holy moonlight as it lies
 Shed from blue midnight, through the solemn trees
 And shadows, on the grey historic walls
 Whence, age by age, the brave and fair have gone ;
 And think that I am with her still, and share
 Her thoughts, and share her hope, and know it sure.

FOR ALICE THEODORA RAIKES.*
 CHRISTMAS, 1888.

The stars of Christmas Eve shone smiling, bright
 As on that eve when star-bright choirs in heaven
 Shed blissful influence on the earth in strains
 Undreamt of when the sage of old was fain
 To dream he heard the music of the spheres.
 But while the night sped on tow'rd Christmas morn
 Gloom gathered o'er me and the skies I watched ;
 And waned away the stars, and sank from sight,
 Though, in their far-off, unseen azure, clear
 And lucent as the thoughts of heavenly minds
 That, uneclipsed by death, still light our own
 Amid the mist and maze of mortal life.

* Now Mrs. Arthur Wilson-Fox.

They waned away from sight, and seemed to sink,
 As many a human heart has felt its hopes
 And happiness depart when winter cloud
 Has overcast its sky, and seemed to quench
 The stars of Christmas, that to eyes which gaze
 Through tears of "mortal yearnings" set on earth
 So early, while in Heaven they burn and shine
 Serene and steadfast in th' eternal blue.

Hark !—Earth has still, then, echoes in her heart
 Of hymns of Heaven : the very air of earth
 Is resonant with Christmas joy again.
 The dark and desert air of winter night
 Gleams constellated, glows with all the stars
 That gather in the Christian's festal Morn,
 Rendering their homage to the Light re-born
 Light of the world ; their choral Hail ! acclaim'd
 As at Creation's dawning, when they sang.
 And now the Day-spring, long a buried hope,
 Long promised by the prescient star of morn,
 Arises in the mystic, magic East,
 And earth and sky lie spell-struck, bare and bright
 And all is Christmas Morning.

And the Day

Still grows, and brightens ; and the radiant shafts
 Pierce, and, perchance, dispel, the pale phantasms
 And darker memories of the haunted night
 Where weary thoughts strayed lone among the lost ;
 And through the melting mist rise tender hopes,

As flowers from earth where Winter laid the loved,
 New hopes, if not for self, for those who come,
 Love-led, to win and wear a rose-wreathed meed—
 New pleasures in prophetic view of theirs,
 Of *her's*, in following forth that fair young life
 Beyond my span, in restful trust that it
 Shall breathe the sweetness and reflect the light
 Of this fair Christmas morn.

Clear-mirrored now

Within my mind, that, as before her, lies
 Clear because calm, I seem her lot to see,
 Bright as her look, and as her nature sweet,
 That smiles upon the world, and ever comes
 To brighten and to bless. And now, in this
 The world's midwinter, but the Zenith day
 Of the great Christian year, when slumbering Earth
 Already stirs with presage of the sun,
 In the sweet "turn," stirs with a dream of spring,
 Of mid-May greenwood and the breath of June,
 Rises the thought, a Christmas flower of hope,
 Upspringing in the wintry wilderness,
 That ere another Christmas sun shall dawn,
 Whether on me or on my place of rest,
 She from her girlhood's graced and happy home
 To one, her own, still happier, shall have passed :
 All loving thoughts attending her, and fain
 To lay them votive on her flowering path.

BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH

“Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat.”—Vulgate.

“I sleep, but my heart waketh.”—*Canticles*, v., 2.

Once, in a dream, so sweet that, while I dreamt,
 I feared 'twas but a dream, and, dreaming, said,
 “I fear I dream,” and “But if this be so,
 It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
 That ever I have felt.”*—once, in that dream,
 I lived true life again. I woke too soon.
 Yet shall the dream prove truth ; perhaps ere long.
 And now I fain would dream again ; not wake,
 But dream another life of dreams made real.
 These things of earth seem now to me less real
 Than those I dream. Not nature now to me,
 Not hill or valley, sea or sky, can seem
 Aught other than a land which I have left
 Far off, behind : the lovely lights and hues
 Have failed and faded ; and the melody
 No more makes echo. I shall breathe no strain
 To sunset hills or moonlight dells again,
 To Fancy's forms, or Passion's, or to Her.

* *King Lear*.

Farewell the mountains, and farewell the stars,
 And farewell, fairest, last, and not for long.
 "A sleep and a forgetting," a long sleep,
 That is but as a moment past, is his
 Who lies forgetting, and who wakes to find
 All real, regained, redressed, and nothing lost.

I deem not that we read a mystic lore
 With dying eyes, or by the ebbing light
 Of sinking life ; but bending o'er the verge
 Of this the world we leave, we seem, perchance,
 To see some space beyond—nor dark nor void.
 I seemed to *know* some things I had but *felt*,
 Or had but guessed, or hoped. Long hours I lay,
 And looked and listened through the breathless night,
 Through the calm starlight. I have lain, nay, stood
 Steadfast, I think, and strong in spirit, stood,*
 Once, twice, and yet again, well-nigh within
 The wide, dark portal, not to be repassed,
 Which opens on eternity. And lights
 Gleamed through it. I have seen. And I have heard
 The sound of far-off music, far, but once
 More near, and sweeter still. I felt the flow,
 The pure waves lapping on my spirit's sense,
 Like the soft, languorous throb of Southern seas,
 And earth seemed passing, past ; and life was lulled
 To longed-for rest ; and I so well content
 To lie so lulled for ever, to be left—

* "Imperatorem ait stantem mori oportere." Sueton. *Vespas.*

Pride, passion, all the fitful fever laid—
 With but one meek memorial, Pardon, Peace ;
 Well, though but all alone in that last hour.
 What if last lulled by murmured words of love,
 Last sounds of this world's life, half heard, perhaps,
 With some strange, hovering doubt if last of earth,
 Or first of Heaven ; and held by tender hands,
 Sweet as her voice, and loving as her words ?
 What if borne far, through that dim land of sleep,
 To that fair land of rest, on angel wings
 Of some bright dream which I would die to dream,
 Some angel winging tow'rd the morn that wakes
 On unknown shores, on worlds that at His smile
 Rise in the blue Pacific of the stars ?

Vain dreams—Atlantic realms in faëry seas,
 Cloud-built by sage or seer, still undiscerned,
 And still to be, alike by thought and eye ?

Not so. Though eye nor ear have seen or heard,
 Deep things of God there are.* A dream was dreamt
 With open eyes, and things far off were seen
 Which men below† beheld not.

Not in vain

Has Nature's poet breathed his noble faith,
 "Knowing that Nature never did betray

* 1 Cor., ii., 9, 10.

† Num., xxiii., 28.

The heart that loved her." Not in vain shall hearts
That trust in Nature's Lord believe that they
Know whom they trust.

So *she* shall live ; and *she*
Be blest, beloved of Him who sees and knows
All that she is and shall be : she His own,
Who gave her beauty, and who guards her heart
And guides her mind.

What care if I lie low,
Forgotten or remembered, so she live
Her happy life at last, and so I rest
In silence and in darkness, sight nor sound
Of earth known there, where earth to earth returns ?
What if no dream of love, love strong as death,
Of light in darkness, dawn that wakes the dead,
May yet revive and visit that long sleep ?
The dream, the thought, the thing has once been mine.
The thought that has been life shall still be mine,
Still gleaming through the deepening gloom, a star,
(" Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn ")
And light me whither I must go alone.*

* " We must all die alone."—Pascal.

OWEN THE VALIANT.

“The yere 1108 Cadogan ap Blethyn made a great feast in Christmas, and had all the Lords of the countrie to his house in Dyuet, among whom came Owen his sonne, who hearing the beautie of Nest wife to Gerald, Steward of Penbrooke praised above all the women in the land, was meruelous desirous to see hir & finding the truth to surmount the fame, he came home all inflamed with hir loue, and in that doting moode the same night returning thither again, with a sort of wild companions took hir and hir two sons and carried them awaie to Powys, and so burning the castell they spoiled all the countrie. Now when Cadogan hard this, he was verie sorie, and feared the king’s displeasure, and forthwith went to Powys, and willed his sonne to send home to Gerald his wife and children with his goods: but Owen in no wise would depart with the woman, yet at hir request he sent to Gerald his children again.”—*Chronicle of the Princes of Wales*, p. 163, 4. ed. 1584.

A slab, laid in the live rock, in a wood at Eglwyseg Manor House (formerly called “Havod Cadwgan” = “Cadogan’s Summer Dwelling-place”), is inscribed as follows:

This path was, according to local tradition, a road along which Owen son of Cadogan (son of Bleddyn ab Cynryrn, king of North Wales and Powys A.D. MLXIV.—MLXXXIII.) led his men to war. He burned Pembroke Castle and carried away Nest wife of Gerald de Windsor A.D. MCVIII. and was slain heading his men against seven to one A.D. MCMVI.

The “seauen to one” (*Chronicle*, p. 182) were headed by the much-wronged Gerald, p. 181.

I.

“Lord Owen, thou’rt The Valiant ; thy lofty, far-spel name
 Is blazoned like the war-fire, the beacon’s brightest flame.
 Born warrior, true Pendragon, ever boldest of the bold,
 Thou has faced the yelling wolf-pack in the snow upon the
 wold ;

Thou has checked the mighty boar’s rush, crashing on thee
 through the wood ;

With thy quicker spear and deadlier thou hast broached his
 fiery blood :

Ever foremost, from thy boyhood, in the fight as in the chase,
 First to win the bristling rampart, first to cede to us the
 praise.

Thou has pierced the Norman hauberk, and cloven helm and
 brain :

Thou hast but delight in danger, and for death hast but
 disdain.

But this, the deed thou willest, this wild and dark emprise,
 This night-assault on stronghold that storm or siege defies,
 On Gerald’s guarded fortress, the warder on the wall—

No wakeful ban-dog warier, and roused and ready all ;

We, these few glaives and javelins, wild, wildered in the night,
 ’Gainst those mailed Norman numbers, well ranged as well
 bedight—

Well—be it : lead, Lord Owen : we follow at thy word ;

At thy least word we follow ; ’tis as the clarion heard.

What man may do we give thee—we shall but strive and die ;
 And all in vain, and only shamed, thou, these, thy friends,
 and I ;

Hurled headlong from the battlements, crushed, mangled, we
shall fall :

And thou, our best and bravest, as ever, first of all.

And we shall not avenge thee ; and he, the Norman high,
Will mock thee ; and the lady—she shall but smile or sigh.
She, still his own, shall hear him exultant in our woe,
Within his strong arms lying, while thou and these lie low,
Our cold, dishonoured bodies by dogs and ravens torn ;
Our hot souls by the fiends : their fangs less keen than
Gerald's scorn.

Thus be it, if thou wilt, then—not else than thus it may,
Though thou, that art 'The Valiant, dost lead and light the
way."

II.

" Yea, Madoc ; yea, 'tis peril ; dark, deadly peril 'tis :
Ye know it well, my warriors ; ye love it well, I wis.
And thus, thus would I win her, thus perilling my life,
My soul, my friends, my honour—my honour ! *there's* the
strife—

All, all for her ; and, winning—and win I will or die—
Such deed, such crime of passion, that soared so strong and
high,

May seem less crime than passion in the gentle lady's eye.
And if, full fain, believe it—I spare your bright young blood,
Friends tried so well already in field, and fire, and flood,
Then I alone will win her or I alone will fall ;
This single sword shall seek her, and find, in bower or hall.
Before yon setting crescent, now piercing hills and sky,
Shall shine an orb, that lady within these arms shall lie ;

Or I shall lie undreaming of nights upon her breast,
And the heart that burns within me shall in holy earth have
rest.

And be it that I perish, when this little life is o'er,
Then the thoughts that thrill and tear me shall thrill and
throb no more."

III.

Then another : " Not of danger, not of death, to thee we speak,
We to thee, our chief, Lord Owen, thee, with whom we both
would seek.

Born of Britain's high Pendragons, thou wouldst that rich
blood outpour

As to bard thy lordly largess, or in bounty all thy store.

Thou art noble, and thou knowest what the noble man
should be.

Not of peril, but of honour, speak I, my chief, to thee.

Less to thee than aught is peril ; so should honour still be
more ;

More than aught that saint or singer can in faith or hope
explore ;

More than aught on earth, or yonder ; more than life, or
death, or love—

Yea, than love, than love, Lord Owen ; yea, than her's thou
dreatest of.

I will speak, my chief. Thou camest good Sir Gerald's
honoured guest ;

At his own board thou hast pledged him ; and his frank
hand thou hast pressed.

Thou art kin ; in thee the lady saw the brother, he the friend.
 Yea, they saw thy noble nature ; be it thine unto the end.
 Were it not dishonour deeper than the danger, than the grave,
 To revisit him at midnight as a felon—sheath thy glaive.
 Sheath it here ; my heart is open ; I will speak my thought
 or die.

Would I live to see my chieftain all his lofty self belie,
 To hear, to know, dishonoured, and in him his friends and
 race,

Him, the champion, him the hero—to behold him branded
 base,

Who for Gerald's Christmas welcome, slunk back to steal
 his wife,

To requite his trust with outrage on his love and on his life ?”

IV.

“ Oh, Mervyn ! well I know it : I knew it all full well.
 It *will* be deep dishonour ; 'twill darken earth and hell ;
 For I to hell shall bear it : a heaven on earth I seek,
 And God, if here I gain it, His wrath in hell will wreak.
 Yea, Mervyn, 'tis dishonour ; and or I win or die,
 Dishonoured I shall stand, or dishonoured I shall lie.
 Deed of daring—but the daring shall not atone the deed ;
 Nor all my blood shall purge me, though at her feet I bleed ;
 Nor though my lone, lost spirit shall weep its burning tears
 Throughout the weary ages, beyond the tale of years.
 Yet, Mervyn, I will have her, or striving for her die.
 I live but for the venture : that only thought have I.

The noble Norman has her ; but her he shall resign.
 All else be his, all honour ; and she and shame be mine.
 I leave him life and glory, and I have her alone—
 Well won, in wreck and ruin, so she be all my own.”

V.

Then Idwal, priest, but noble, and boldest warrior's peer,
 Lord Owen's foster-brother, and more than brother dear ;
 And late his fellow, foremost in each wild path he trod,
 In peril or in pleasure ; now changed, and brought to God,
 Long time laid low, and tended by holy ones and fair,
 Where battle-hurts and sin's remorse had all their Church's
 care.

Came he this night unbidden ? or not unsought by some
 Who bent on deed of daring, and facing instant doom,
 Might somewhat fain half bow them before the priest, that he
 Might hear most frank confession, and shrive them fresh and
 free ?

Thus Idwal—“ Not of peril, which to thee seems beacon
 bright,

Not of earthly shame or honour, speak I to thee to-night.
 I, though the most unworthy of all that serve and laud,
 And wield His awful warnings, I speak to thee of God.
 Thy soul is His ; and angels and fiends around it stand,
 And what if they* this midnight thy soul of thee demand ?”

* Ταύτη τῇ νεκτὶ τὴν ψυχὴν σου ἀπαιτοῦσιν ἀπὸ σοῦ.

The Authorised Version fails to render the solemn force of the original ; and the Revised only refers to the Greek in the margin.

VI.

“ I think they will, my brother ; and I to God and Her
Will yield it up ; and, haply, my fate her heart may stir.”

VII.

“ Say, to God and to Our Lady.”

VIII.

“ To Gerald’s. She is his ;
But his she shall not long be, if I——”

IX.

“ What man is this—

The weak, wild-raving lover, whose heart can only beat
With throb of evil passion at a woman’s dreamt-of feet—
And she the matron-consort of another, and thy kin,
She whom thou canst hope for never but with triple crime
and sin ?

What man art thou becoming if thy heart and soul of fire
Sink from bright and soaring passion to the glow of base
desire ?

Shall the slimy tempter lure thee, and drag thee to the dust,
And subdue thine eagle-spirit with the clinging curse of lust ?
Thou art Owen, born of Powys : unto whom but man like thee
Should thy Cymru* look for champion, for the far-seen King
to be ?

Upon thee we saw her gazing with hope and trust and pride ;
And—shalt thou not soon show it ?—thou hast not her hope
belied.

* Cambria.

To thine ardent, lofty spirit, to thy strong, skilled, conquering hand,

To thy genius, swift and subtle, keen and piercing as thy brand,

Turns in trust the fair, torn, bleeding, trampled life of this thy land.

Wilt thou say—the foe prevailing, resistless is his weight,
Or we so rent and broken, that ourselves we make our fate—
Wilt thou say that more thou canst not than thou vainly
hast essayed,

That chiefs and warriors all in vain have glorious story made ?
But not in vain, O warrior-chief, Christ's warrior if thou be,
To give thine heart and all to God, Who gave Himself for
thee ;

For whom the best and bravest of every Christian race,
Have fought and died in Holy Land, and won His brightest
grace.

Far off in Holy Land they lie, in holy earth they sleep,
Who won His sacred Sepulchre, and bowed them there to
weep ;

There bowed them, blood-dyed warriors, there laid them
down to die

Where He whose cross they wore had lain, and rose beyond
the sky.

Once, twice, thyself hast almost willed to spread Crusader's
sail,

The brighter Red Cross blazoned upon thy shining mail ;
And, vowed upon the sacred sign that consecrates thy steel,
To strike the valiant Paynim, and at the Tomb to kneel ;

And, if so willed on high, to take thy last and blessed rest
Where sleep the champions of the cross, the bravest and
the best.

Far rather so, my brother, for thou art noble aye,
Far rather so than perish in some ignoble fray—
Strife and source alike ignoble, the force as base as fraud—
Slain hot in sin, sent sudden before the judging God ;
Slain as vilest midnight felon, as outlaw red of hand,
In foul attempted outrage on a lady of the land ;
She, consort of the gracious lord who hailed thee guest and
friend ;

Thyself a noble sprung from heights whence thou should'st
ne'er descend.

Such shame as that, such scorn and hate as all, and chiefest
she,

Should ever brand thy name withal,—shall such be sought
by thee ?”

X.

“ Ah ! that, e'en that—I know it—may me befall, to die,
Struck down, down-trodden, at his feet, shamed, scorned, at
hers to lie ;

Scorned, loathed, in memory yet to live, undying as a name
Made mock through all the ages, who dreamt of deathless
fame ;

I, brave Cadogan's heir, who felt the blood that oft has dyed
Our well-won fields, beat higher still than with Pendragon
pride,

I, who, thou say'st, have thought and willed the better
 things and days
 Than these of proud and reckless youth, or warrior's clanging
 praise ;
 Who once and yet again, thou know'st, as brother, not as
 priest,
 Have turned from strife and riot, my burning heart appeased ;
 Lain soothed with blessed dreamings as his whose heart was
 pure,
 The good knight Galahad (but his, because he was, were
 sure),
 Bright dreams of deeds of daring for God in Morn-Land done,
 Of surging hosts encountered, and fields from Paynim won :
 The Red-Cross borne and brandished as the meteor-sword
 of God,
 Borne high on Zion's ramparts, to fling its blaze abroad.
 Who shall storm thy ramparts, Zion ? who shall say, ' That
 deed be mine ?'
 Who shall grasp the Red-cross banner, crying, ' Follow ! ' ?"

XI.

" That be thine."

XII.

" Not yet ! not yet ! Not Heaven's, but Her's, I reck not
 aught till she
 Has lain long hours within these arms, nor till she turn to
 me ;
 Once all mine own, mine own at last : all else beneath the
 sky—
 Earth, hell, and Heaven—alike to me. I win her, or I die.

No more ! Whose hearts are mine, whose hands for
 warriors' hearts can speak,
 And know to find the Saxon's or the Norman's when they
 seek,—
 Up, Cymry ! hither ! hither ! and thither, where she lies !
 Not long shall he— We parley ! He holds her, and he
 dies."

XIII.

They are rushing through the darkness : 'tis blackest
 midnight there ;
 But darker their fell purpose, to daze it with a glare,
 With the glare of conflagration, that shall light the land
 and deep,
 And flaming turrets, whence they think to see white
 maidens leap :
 Not many, these black bandits, but they the boldest, worst,
 Of that fierce race, hot-blooded, deep-glowing, aye as erst :
 Hearts higher than their mountains, than the peak where
 winter lags
 Till the Bel-Tan sun is setting, and sterner than their
 crags ;
 Hard as the steel that quivers, eager in their clutching
 hands,
 And keen their flashing spirits as their bright, fresh-grinded
 brands ;
 Sped by that kindling ardour, caught by that contagion
 strong.
 Of the fiery heart of Owen, where careering demons throng.

Darkly on they plunge ; Priest Idwal beholding as they go
 Dark devils their track pursuing, through the fair, pure
 Christmas snow ;
 On, on ! the fiends may follow, or may front them : on they
 press ;
 Strongly breast the blast, and strongly stem, and strike
 through all its stress.

XIV.

It is done, the deed of darkness : it is writ in blood and
 fire.
 'Tis writ in hell ; and there shall he recall fulfilled desire.
 They have ravaged halls and bowers with rapacious sword
 and flame :
 He that feasted them scarce 'scapes them, stoops to 'scape
 with ruth and shame ;
 Perhaps of that day thinking, that one day worth a life,
 That shall see him strike for vengeance, sure and full, in
 fairer strife,
 When his sword or shaft, that glance not from hauberk
 howso tried,
 Shall find the false, foul felon who bears away his bride ;
 Who tore her, pale and trembling, from her sweet and
 sacred rest,
 And——

XV.

Life or death—what recks it ? He has won her, he is blest.
 He beheld her in her beauty, and shall ever see her so.
 Living, dying, *that* contents him : it endureth evermo.

He beheld her perfect beauty : he made her all his own.
That alone he sought. He has it. He has all in that alone.

XVI.

Away ! away ! the brave black steed, that knows no lord
but one,
And knows or needs no goading heel, comes flashing and is
gone ;
And flashes through the darkness, and thunders through
the night ;
And bears his lord, who bears his prey, far on with eagle-
flight,
Far northward, where the seven bright stars, that shine
where Powys lies,
Shall shine again for him when he shall garner there his
prize ;
There lay at last the priceless spoil he won in Gerald's
bower ;
And plead for pardon, plead for more, in some sweet
starlight hour.

XVII.

They meet strong Teivi, hurling his waters to the deep—
Down rushing he, they wending up Cerédig's dreary steep.
They gaze on swollen Ystwith, and seek the doubtful ford.
They breast black, thundering Rheidol, and she clasps her
gladdened lord.
Let it rage, the roaring river, strong as all its kin, that spring
From the heart of wild Plinlimmon,* so the lady closer cling !

* The Severn, the Wye, and the Rheidol rise in Plinlimmon.

Fairer Dovey, smiling, meets them, the lover and the bride ;
 Bright Dovey hastes to welcome the chieftain in his pride.
 It is Powys here, his Powys : it is homeward that they go.
 That is Dinas of the princes : that is Aran's crown of snow.
 "Thou seest yon wandering waters, twin streams, that
 soon shall meet

And mingle—and shall murmur love-homage at thy feet—
 Know'st thou, love, that ancient river? hast heard of holy Dee?
 'Tis our own ancestral river : shall it not be dear to thee?
 Through the lake that lies before thee, as the moonrise
 meets thee now,

Stray the gentle blended waters, fain to mirror thy fair brow."
 But onward yet ! and onward ! Edernion's placid vale,
 And Glyndwr's (long hereafter made theme that shall not fail)
 Alike in vain would woo them on-speeding to their goal,
 Along dark Berwyn's ridges and their river's rush and roll.
 And at last they leave their river. Not yet, but soon, the
 pause.

'Tis the Stone of blood-bought Powys* ; 'tis the Valley of
 the Cross,
 That lies among the valleys where heroes † died and rest,
 In Rhiw Velen, in Llan Gollen, laid unknown, but not unblest.

* The inscription on the "Pillar of Eliseg" (properly Elised), now almost effaced, appears to have recorded that Elised recovered his inheritance, Powys (Povosia), by his sword ("HEREDITATEM POVOS . . . GLADIO SUO").—Gough's Camden, vol. III., p. 215. Pennant, writing about Eliseg and the Pillar, makes three of his gross and ridiculous blunders within the space of a few lines ; and they remain uncorrected and unnoticed in the last edition.

† "Bedh Guell yn y Rhiw Velen,
 Bedh Sawyl yn Llan Gollen."

Llowarch Hên.

XVIII.

“Not to yon grim stronghold frowning from the height
where tempests dwell,

Not to Din-Bran will I bear thee ; but it still shall guard us
well.

We will follow yet, some bow-shots, those Northern stars
that wheel

O’er the mighty hill that rises where the mingling waters peal,
That shall lull thee in the stillness when thou layest that
dear head

Where thou findest home, and ownest, and the blessed word
hast said.

We shall find it soft and smiling where the stern rock-
barriers stand,

And the narrowed vale ends sudden, but we no pass demand ;
And we rest, and ask no wider, and ask no fairer, land.

To the deep heart of the mountains, to the inmost vale we
come ;

In the depths of rock and forest we find our mountain home ;
That vale of rest rock-sheltered, that hill-side forest-clad,
Each month seems there the fairest, and every season glad ;
In Cadogan’s summer-pleasance* we will winter ; and the
night

Of the dying year shall speed it like a revel ; but the light
Of thy sweet presence only would make all seasons bright.”

XIX.

Is it conscience-haunted darkness that gathers o’er their way ?
Do they see pale spectres peering in the ghostly crag-walls grey ?

* Havod Cadwgan.

Not the bandit-chief, not Owen : he bids her look and see
 How the lordly Rock of Arthur, King that was and is to be,
 Stands among the stars of morning, and asserts its noble
 name ;
 Stands stately, kingly, mystic ; through the ages still the
 same.

XX.

Happy valley ! * Hushed in slumber they their happy
 vale have found ;
 Hushed in holy calm as solemn as the dreamy heights
 around :
 Not a ripple in the silence, save the rippling of the rill.
 Hark ! the distant falling water, heard fitful. All is still.
 Hark ! the lone owl in the forest—the fox upon the hill.

XXI.

And the moon, that long has wandered, belated in her quest,
 O'er the wide-spread, lawny mountains that rise against the
 east,
 Comes, and looks o'er lofty Forwyn ; and he tells his love
 that ne'er
 Has rising moon or setting shed rays on face so fair ;
 And tells her—he had said it—"I reckon not aught till she
 Has lain long hours within mine arms, *nor till she turn
 to me.*"

XXII.

"Nay, Owen—nay, Lord Owen"—

* * * *

* The vale of Eglwyseg is somewhere called "The Happy Valley."

THE GOOD NEWS FROM GERALD.

I.

To the sweet spouse of Gerald, who—fie the foul wrong!—
 Had lain in the fierce grip of Owen so long,
 To the fair one by grace of Our Lady restored,
 All blushes and tears, to her still loving lord,
 They bear the glad tidings that vengeance at last
 Hath stricken the strong arms that held her so fast;
 That at last the day dawned on the vigil of hain,
 Wherein, with the fire in his heart and his brain,
 He had brooded and bided—the day that so bright
 Shewed the mail of the foeman, and lit the keen flight
 Of Sir Gerald's sure shaft, that so soon slaked its thirst,
 And found the false heart of the felon who erst
 On the joyance of Christmas, which late he had shared,
 Burst with sword and with flame and the fiends that ne'er
 spared,
 And tore the pale lovely one forth as his prize,
 And beheld her white beauty, and smiled at her cries.
 They tell her that Owen lies low, in his blood,
 That his band lie around him, each man where he stood;
 That Gerald the noble fares homeward with speed,
 Unscathed and exultant, to claim a sweet meed,

When the lady shall spring to the arms of her knight,
 And haste to unbuckle his quiver so light,
 His arrows well spent where they rust in the dead,
 For whom not a prayer, not a sigh shall be sped.
 And they leave her, to pour her thanksgivings, they ween,
 To Gerald's Preserver, Avenger, and Queen,
 To the holy Maid-Matron, who sees from on high,
 And hath bless'd her ; nor note they her lip nor her eye.

II.

"And Owen The Valiant lies low in his blood ;
 And his true men around him, each man where he stood,
 And Sir Gerald the noble (my maidens, 'tis ye
 That dub him) Sir Gerald fares homeward to me,
 Unseathed and exultant. Sir Gerald stood high,
 And watched the far flight of his shaft with calm eye ;
 Stood firm, well away (praise the Saints !) from the sweep
 Of the sword of The Valiant that made widows weep.
 Ay ! 'tis thus, then !—the Norman deals death from afar,
 Or whelms with mailed legions the true sons of war ;*

* "Yet not even under circumstances so adverse did the descendants of the ancient Britons renounce their defence, or forfeit their old hereditary privilege to be called THE BRAVEST OF MANKIND."—Scott, *The Betrothed*, ch. 9.

Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald de Barri, son of William de Barri and Agharad, daughter of Nesta, wife of Gerald de Windsor) says (*Descriptio Cambrie*, lib. I., c. 8, written 1204-5,) "King Henry the Second, on answering enquiries of Emanuel, Emperor of Constantinople. . . . among other remarkable circumstances, mentioned the following : That in a certain part of the island there was a people called Welsh, so bold and so ferocious, that when unarmed they did not fear to encounter an armed force, being ready to shed their blood in defence of their country, and to sacrifice their lives for renown."—Sir R. C. Hoare, vol. II., p. 290.

And thus that the Briton, true lord of the land,*
 Dies with scorn in his eye, and with sword in his hand.
 And here, in the bower that the Norman hath built,
 Whose stones have been laid in the blood he hath spilt,
 I, daughter of Dynevor†—thrall of th' abhorr'd,
 Wait the slayer of Owen of Powys, my Lord ;
 Must hail him, and—horror !—here, now, when my heart,
 That shrinks from his look, and would welcome his dart,
 Speeds far from this hold of the Norman, and strays
 In the vale that I love, in the flowery wood-ways,
 In the lone happy valley, that now, as so oft,
 Lies fair in the moonlight, as sweet and as soft
 As then—that for-ever blue midnight—when ‘ *we* ’
 (Ah, the word !—do I say it ?) when Owen and she
 Whom he bore through the slaughter and fire, bore away,
 From the poor haughty Norman, the bold Briton's prey ;
 When first we beheld it, our long, fiery flight
 At last at its goal, where our Christmas shone bright,
 In the home of his race, which they won by their might.

III.

“ Not there ! oh, not there !—not on beauty or bliss,
 Not on hours that, now gone, shed but darkness on this ;
 Not with thee dwell my thoughts, though the memories
 come o'er,
 Oh, vale of Saint Egla ! mine now never more.

* See the very curious passage in Giraldus *Itin. Cambr.* 1. 1., c. 23 ; Hoare, vol. 1., p. 37-8.

† Nesta was daughter of Rhys ab Tudor, Prince of South Wales (Dinevawr = Dynevor), slain in battle 1091 ; and her mother was cousin of Owen's father, Cadogan.

But *there*, where thy lord, who was light and was life,
 Thine Owen The Valiant, unmatched in the strife,
 Lies stricken by hand that with his never strove,
 Lies far from his valley, his home, and his love ;
 Lies lone, with the barb in the heart that beat high,
 Lone and cold on the dark earth, beneath the dark sky ;
 There, where Gerald the Norman hath bidden his kind,
 The wolf and the raven, to glut his own mind.

IV.

“ And when Gerald the slayer comes home in his pride,
 Shall I say, ‘ Where is he from whose face thou didst hide ?
 Where is Owen The Valiant, the vanquishless ? where
 Hast thou left the high chieftain, the hundred kings’* heir ?”

V.

“ And shall not I tend him, my kin, though he lie
 Where he fell, by the dart, with his face to the sky,
 As aye to the foe, when the foe dared to face ?
 (Bold Gerald dared look, across broad middle space)
 And shall not he sleep the last sleep of the brave
 In the long-hallow’d earth that his forefathers gave ?
 And shall not the fane that they raised, and that rings
 With the loud pealing anthem o’er warriors and kings,

* “ Because he at whom I aimed my blow,” said the Briton, his eye glancing fiercely from the King to De Lacy and back, “ had spilled the blood of the descendant† of a thousand kings ; to which his own gore, or thine, proud Count of Anjou, is but as the puddle of the highway to the silver fountain.”—Scott. *The Betrothed*, ch. 31. See also Girald. *Descr. Cambr.*, lib. II., c. 10. Hoare, vol. II., p. 360.

† Gwenwynwyn, Prince of Powys, kinsman of Owen ab Cadogan.

Resound the deep Requiem, though *he* shall not hear
Till the trumpet once more thrills the warrior's ear?

VI.

“ That thou shalt—thou shalt yet take thine only true rest
In the holiest earth that the Church ever bless'd.
Yet, dearer—oh ! dearer how far !—now to lie
There, where thou, love, art lying, beneath the cold sky,
To be torn by the wolf and the raven, and, strewn
On the glade in the wild wood, where now the pale moon
Beholds thee, to whiten and waste into dust,
Than to live, as for one holy duty I must ;
Than to live but to lay thee in earth, and to know
That there, even there, we shall meet never mo ;
That, though love would full fain seek the dark by its light,
Thou wilt still lie alone, as thou liest to-night.

VII.

“ Thou shalt lie in my heart till it lies 'neath the stone.
Thou shalt shine on my dreams, that shall make thee mine
own ;
Thou shalt shine in my soul when I wake from this dream,
This life that is no life, these things that but seem.
And where'er thou may'st wander, a spirit, or lie,
In light or in darkness, there, Owen, would I.”

THE HALL.

I.

Rose the bard, a bard of battle, who had pierc'd as far in fight
As the bard of King Cadwallon when the Dragon blaz'd so
bright,

As the bard of dread Cadwallon, bold Avan*, bard of blood,
When they thunder'd on the Northland, and flash'd from
flood to flood.

Rose the bard before the chieftain ; then sat and harp'd and
sang,

Long and loud, until the rafters like a tower at storming rang.
And the gleaming arms around him rang choral on the wall,
And the steel hearts of the warmen rang high reverberant all,
Rang as oft on helm of Saxon had rung the Brython blade,
Which not the Saxon buckler and not the helm had stay'd,
As oft on mail of Norman had clash'd the brazen mace,
Which not the Dane's broad axes had warded from his face.
And the hand was on the hilt, and the steel throbb'd for the
word.

And they turned them to the chieftain ; and the chieftain
sat and heard.

* Avan of the Bloody Spear, bard of Cadwallon ap Cadvan,

II.

And the bard rose in his fury, and soar'd with fiery speed
 To the viewless upper ages, to the height of fabled deed ;
 Then descended in the whirlwind to the dawn within his ken,
 And adown the generations, to the days of godlike men.
 And he sang of ancient empire, that had wan'd but had not
 ceas'd ;

Of the immemorial Sun-king of the mighty, mystic East ;
 Of the first bold westward voyagers who had track'd him
 o'er the waste,

Far across the world of waters, to the evening-land of rest.
 And he sang the glorious Belyns of the sunbright orient
 crown,*

And the golden sunbright blazon that with their race came
 down ;

Of the Sun and orient Dragon,† borne high, in beacon light,
 To the isles of utmost ocean, to the Occident and Night.

And he bade the loud Gododin of the stormy North resound ;
 And he sang of Cymric conquest, and of Cymry conquest-
 crown'd.

And the Cymric sword comes flashing, and the lands their
 true lords hail ;

And the Twelve dispart the kingdoms ; and Caswallon smites
 the Gael ;

* "In former times they wore Crowns in form of the Suns Beams, because they were Suns, and as flaming Lights, for the whole world was led by them and their Examples. Jupiter 3 such Crowns in Pale Sol born by Bely Maure, the last king of Britain."—Randle Holme, *Academy of Armory and Blazon*.

† See *Gwarchan Maeldere*, 2. Davies, *Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*, p. 583, 4 ; but also the note † p. 584. Davies, *Mythology*, p. 437.

And he sang the song of triumph that had rung in Cymric
halls
Ere the bolt had seath'd Deganwy,* or the Saxon tried its
walls.
And he sang the slaughter'd Saxon, the ruin far and wide,
When the sword of Rhun the royal swept the land like
Conway's tide,
When the men of stern, strong Arvon, where the tempest
dwells on high,
Bore the thunders of Eryri, and fir'd the morning sky.
And he sang of Cymric Mervyn, and of thrice-great Rodri's
might,
And the battle-deaths and heirship, and of Rodri's Vengeance†
bright ;
And of Tudwal thron'd in Dyved, and of him‡ who smote
the Dane
When the dire black pagan's§ Raven swooped on lone
Menevia's fane.

* A.D. 812. "Decanorum" (*v.l.* Degannoe) "ietu fulminis
comburit."—*Annales Cambrie*.

† Rodri Mawr (Roderic the Great) was slain in battle by the
Saxons, A.D. 877 (*Brut y Tywysogion*, *Annales Cambrie*), as was his
father Mervyn, A.D. 844 (*ib. ib.*) Anarawd, his son, obtaining a
victory, in 880, called it "Dial Rodri," "Vengeance of Rodri."
("Gueit Conguoy digal Rotri a Deo."—*Ann. Camb.* "Weith
Conwy y dial Rodri o Duw."—*Brut.*)

‡ Gwaithvoed, ancestor of Oliver Cromwell, and of several Welsh
families. He is said to have been wounded in defending the temple
of St. David against a *Seythian* infidel.—Noble's *Memoirs of the
Protectoral House of Cromwell*, vol. i., p. 3.

§ In the *Annales Cambrie* the Danes are usually styled *gentiles*, or
gentiles nigri; and in the *Brut*, *Paganyeit genedyl*, *pobloed*, and
kenedloed duon (the Normans, *Nordmani* and *Normanyeit duon*.)

III.

So he sang a race of heroes—the long race heroic all
 Since the royal Cumbrian wanderer sang his peerless hero's
 fall—*

Kings and bards† and well-sung warriors, men whose spirits
 songs had stirr'd,
 And whom song had borne to glory ; and the chieftain sat
 and heard.

IV.

“ O ! the land is Wales as ever, and the land is Britain's
 boast ;

And the hills are high and haughty, and they spurn each
 surging host.

And the children of the mountains shall sally from on high
 With their thunders and their torrents that are born in
 purple sky.‡

And the moonlight lies as lovely o'er the lovely land below,
 O'er the wide Powysian Marches, as a dreaming maiden's glow.
 And the fords of Dee and Severn lie bright among the woods :
 And the thousand brave would breast them though they
 foam'd with all their floods.

And the plains of warlike England lie ripe and broad and fair.
 And the flower of English maidens breathes ripe as harvest
 there.

* Gwèn, son of Llowarch Hên.

† Several Welsh princes were distinguished bards.

‡ “ The deep aerial blues ” of North Wales, &c.,—“ those deep blues which Londoners think unnatural in pictures.”—*Life of Stothard*.

And watchful is the Norman, and a noble foe withal ;
 And strong are Norman castles and high the Norman wall.
 And proudly waves his banner ; and proud in topmost tower
 Sat the lovely Norman lady with the sunset in her bower.
 And she smil'd on knightly champion ; and folded now in
 rest
 Lies the lovely Norman lady, with the moonlight on her
 breast.
 And the bard should sing her vespers in the shade of yon
 dim grove,
 And the red lips of the maiden should glow to British love."
 So he sang, and aim'd his song-shafts, he the bard who had
 not err'd,
 So they said, in many aimings ; and the chieftain sat and
 heard.

V.

And again the bard rose mighty, rose in storm and rose in
 fire,
 Like a prophet in the spirit, like a prophet in his ire ;
 Strong and fierce as swollen torrent when it sweeps away
 the flocks,
 When it whir's away its barriers and raves around the rocks ;
 Fierce as fire that tears the forest, as the thunder on the hills
 When it launches flaming glances and a gather'd wrath fulfils.
 So the Awen* rose within him, so it swell'd and so it sped.
 And they saw the bard of battle in the glory of the dead.

* Bardic inspiration.

VI.

Then it sank ; then hover'd, floated, in the air, that
-trembling lay :

'Twas the wailing of a spirit that must fleet and pass away.
Then it throbb'd along the harp-strings, that had thrill'd as
thrills a heart :

'Twas the moaning of a spirit that must to its fate depart.
Then it died upon the harp-strings like a last, sweet dying
word.

And it linger'd, and it fled ; and the chieftain sat and
heard.

THE WOOD.

It was earliest summer morning, and the halls were hush'd
at last.

And the chieftain sought the woodlands, and thro' the
silence pass'd.

Better this the balmy morning and the waking bird's low
trill

Than the roar of heated revel or the bard's tumultuous thrill.
Better yet were fiery tempest the dark oak-forest rending,
Or the rush of swollen waters from the savage hills
descending,

Or the black, stern, brooding stillness of the tarn that none
explore,

Or the thunder-voice of ocean warring on a rocky shore.

But he walked among the shadows, spray and bole of
antique mass,

Where the white, melting moonlight lay along the dewy
grass.

Oh the sweetness and the sadness of the beauty of the dawn,

Of the dreamy golden star-night waking, waning, into morn !

Oh the darkness of the spirit that, in sleepless soul-disease,
Not in thought and not in action can its aching need
appease !

“ Now no more the toil or daring—day of deed no more for
me !

And what is thought but anguish, when I can but think of
thee ?

I have ridden deep-in battle : I have tried—I could not die.
I have watch'd by night beside thee : the cold night-wind
went by.

I have heard the soaring anthem : it sank upon thy grave.

I heard the hollow Requiem, which to her who rests they
gave.

I have heard the priest, and heard them all—the preaching
and the prayer.

Did they tell me I should meet her ? did they bid me wait ?
and where ?

Did they tell me *where* to seek her, and *how* to bide the
while ?

And *when* that Resurrection shall restore her buried smile ?

Did they tell me she forgave him who was happy far away,
That her heart was mine and with me when in lonely death
she lay ?

Lost for me, and lost for ever !—I will live the loss to bear.
I will live because 'tis bitter. I will live because I dare.
Would'st thou bid me think of solace, if thou this hour
could'st see ?

And where shall I find solace ? for where shall I find *thee* ?
Shall I seek thee where thou sleepest in thy lowly, lovely
faith ?

Ah ! but *where* in all the darkness, in the vast dark land of
death ?

I may lose the very memory—all that now to me thou art.
I would press it and its anguish still closer to my heart.
I may lose thee if I follow, lose all that yet I have.
I must cherish this the one thought that blooms upon the
grave,

This that now is all my being, all that in the wide world's
dearth

Breathes of her that was divinest and is now a thing of
earth.

I must live : my one meet penance is to bear this heart
alone.

Could she see it, she would bid me die now upon her own."

VORTIGERN.

“*Vortigern’s Valley*, the immense hollow, to which Vortigern is reported to have fled from the rage of his subjects, and where it was said that he and his castle were consumed with lightning. . . . Fancy cannot frame a place more fit”—*etc.* “Embosomed in a lofty mountain, on two sides bounded by stony steeps, on which no vegetables appear but the blasted heath and stunted gorse; the third side exhibits a most tremendous front of black precipice, with the loftiest part of the mountain *Eifl* soaring above; and the only opening to this secluded spot is towards the sea, a northern aspect!” *etc.* Pennant, *Tour in Wales*. Vide Nenn. *Hist.* c. 37, 39, sqq. Gild. *Hist.* c. 23. H. Huntendun. *Hist. Angl.* lib. 2.

’Twas late in autumn evening : storms had pass’d,
 And the sunk sun a pale, faint farewell given.
 Dark clouds lower’d o’er his fall, dark, weighty, vast,
 Like fates of empire pois’d in angry heaven.
 And the cold, sullen sea, its wrath scarce o’er,
 Surg’d heavily along the wild, worn shore.

And drear and dark along the drear, dark sea
 Rose the great mountains to their triple height;
 Then, for one moment, like lost royalty,
 Touch’d by the gleam, a diadem of light.
 Bare the lone hill that heaves as “*Maiden’s Breast*”
 Lay to the lurid sky that on it press’d.

There, to the utmost verge of his wide land,
 With steps long stay'd in many a field of strife,
 With long-tried warriors, still his own true band,
 With sore-tried heart, still strong in pride and life,
 Came the doom'd king, steel'd to endure and dare,
 Came as comes deep-gor'd lion to his lair ;

Came Vortigern, the royal and th' accurs'd,
 The proud Pendragon, Britain's boast and bale,
 Her tyrant and betrayer, all-aspers'd,
 And twice acclaim'd her lord, whate'er the tale—
 Tale of wild passion, dark with deadly war,
 And since, alas ! yet more unhallow'd far.

He came, and by him, leaning to his heart,
 Came one—one nearest, who had come too near—
 So young, so fair—so fair that gazers start,
 And, ah ! so like her lover that they fear.
 And on his regal front th' imperial child
 Bent eyes of pride and love that glow'd and smil'd.

He came as exile to the wildest West ;
 But king, and not as king discrown'd, came he ;
 Nor darken'd yet of aspect, if of breast :
 'Twas Vortigern, twice lord of land and sea ;
 Fear'd oft and sought ; the subtle one and strong ;
 And steadfast now, in ruin and in wrong.

Firm now, fix'd there,* he fronted swooping Fate,
 With brow that seem'd to brave the thunder-flame ;
 And kingly in the calm of ancient state
 Bore the dark glories of his evil fame ;
 Bore high that broad, thought-throbbing brow which sin
 And cares and toils that blasted from within.

They walk'd apart, the lover and his child,
 While camp'd their warriors on the hill-side high.
 They sought the shore—their hearts the wide and wild ;
 They gaz'd upon the waters and the sky—
 Gaz'd, and on them the stormy hills gloom'd down,
 The soaring Evil cast his haughty frown.

Strength, pride, and sin, the darkness and the splendour
 Of some great fate, the forefelt fate severe
 Of fiery hearts and natures fine and tender—
 Love, anguish, desolation—all were there.
 And there *they* stood, and fac'd their destiny,
 In the cold nightfall, by the surging sea.

Then each on other look'd the love each gave,
 And looked their then one thought, “ We come to die ;”
 Then darkly on the valley of their grave,
 On the dark valley, on the lowering sky.
 Then rose the brow that he to her had given,
 As rose the mountains 'gainst the gloom of heaven ;

* Juv. xiii., 240.

Still, haught, indom'table—far up, away :

No *shown* defiance there, nor aught unmeet
In mien of true born-nobles high as they :

Theirs blood too proud for plaint, or boast, or threat—
Deep hearts all will, great hearts that, torn and broken,
Die in stern silence, die and give no token.

Love, pride, ambition, guilt—love over all—

Ev'n o'er his guilt—oh ! only too much love—
Those things made that strong self, and those his fall.

And she—she was his own, but far above.
She look'd into his face, and, looking, laid
Her hand upon his hilt, and nothing said.

He spoke : “ And now upon the marge we stand ;

And now the western waters 'gainst us flow.
This, this, then, is my last of British land ;

And here my last of Britons bide the foe.
And all is passing, all is pass'd, from me ;
And I have all, and more, for I have *thee*.

And let them come—come all, come conquering Fate.

And let the churchmen praise their heavenly hosts,
And curse us by their gods with Christian hate,

And doom us to the hell their mercy boasts,
And charge their chronicles with monk-made wares
As true as tales of fire from heaven or bears.*

* Vortigern, in a recognised spirit of prophecy, alludes, with affected indifference, to his own chronicled fate, and with undisguised profanity to 2 Kings, i., 10-12, and ii., 23-4.

Not these nor those—nor monks, nor warriors—now
 Shall vex us long ; nor perils of the day,
 Nor loud alarms by night, nor toils of brow,
 Nor throes of heart, nor loss of ancient sway—
 Memory nor future—no, nor—no, nor aught
 Unquiet in our own self-searching thought.

Here may we bide our evening, here our night.
 Our sunset hills shall yield us space for rest,
 And space for many a foeman. Eyes of light
 Shall watch us, with the fair star of the West.
 And *we* shall sleep a deep, sweet sleep, and *we*
 Lie long i' the valley by the sounding sea.

We shall not rest the less for what men say,
 Though all the hollow ages echo blame :
 And once some far-off time of others' sway,
 When still may beat this blood as whence it came,
 Shall echo us, 'neath some dark autumn sky,
 To lone one lingering o'er us where we lie."

DULCE EST QUOD TERRA TEGIT.

[Near Syracuse, January, 1876.]

Πλοῦτος ἄβυσσος.—ÆSCHYLUS.

Where my treasure, there my heart is lying ;

There where I my earthly treasure laid

When I heard "I AM THE RESURRECTION,"

Then that "*Earth to earth*," and all was said ;

Where my thoughts through weary days and wanderings,

Through the nights of long, long years, have lain,

Lying as my head, in dreams, long *after*,

On the little coffin lay again ;

Where the darkness, where the sacred silence

Of his slumber in the holy earth,

In the chamber where he lies with dear ones,

Wait my winging from the world's wide dearth.

Here, where all divine Sicilian beauty,

Sun and sea, this fairest morning smil'd

Ev'n on me, one hour, 'tis o'er : I turn me,

Still beholding, still, a dying child.

Where they laid my lost lies all my treasure.

There lies all that can be aught to me.

To the heart that lies, still quick, beside him,

In that darkness, nothing bright can be.

Yet were things of earth to me as treasure,—
 Words of great ones, lovely dreams of Art,
 Alps and torrents, sunset, shore, and forest,
 Thoughts and summits from the world apart ;

Rome and Hellas, Nile and boundless Desert,
 Cyclad Isles, and this my Sicily ;
 Forms and memories stateliest, sweetest, treasur'd—
 Failing treasures !—there with him they lie.

There, then, all !

* * * *

Yet have I guarded treasure
 In the heart that there lies buried deep.
 Faith, relum'd, shall lead through all the darkness ;
 Hopes reviv'd shall watch that holy sleep.

He who taught that where we lay our treasure
 There the heart lies with it—it was He
 Told of treasure, true, unfailing, garner'd
 Where alone fruition true may be.

When He said, “ *Because I live,*” He pledg'd us
 Words of life that shall not pass away.
 In the Love that life and death transcended
 Beam'd the Truth of His eternal Day.

* * * *

Well—we murmur—words are words—we falter.

Well—we face the worst : nay, that is past.

Let despair be comfort : all is over :

All is darkness, silence, peace at last.

* * * *

Yet, not so ! not so to minds the highest,

Hearts the noblest, looms the mystery.

On the heights of thought and loftier feeling

Dawns bright earnest of the far To be.

By the grave He stood with human sorrows ;

Mortal yearning *there* won tears divine.

Flowers of Heaven shall wake and bloom above it ;

And the vernal Dayspring comes to mine.

* * * *

Dreams !—I gaze : 'tis but the world before me,—

Beauteous still—Sicilian shores and skies—

Beauteous most, and blessed, now, reflecting

Those bright words, “To-day in Paradise.”

BRITISH INDIA, 1857.

“Quæ neque Dardaniis campis potuere perire,
Nec quum capta capi, nec quum combusta cremari.”

ENNIUS.

It passes, with the clanging peal*
Toll'd out from many a tower,
While wanes yon changeful orient moon,
Pale spirit of the hour.

It passes, echoing deeply down
All memories, stern or tender—
That heavy year of England's fates,
Of sorrows and of splendour.

And *they* have pass'd, and *they* sleep well
In yon dark Land of Morning,
Who know no more those thousand deaths
And wait the Life-Light's dawning.

Oh, not for sins of theirs fell they,
Fair child and fairer maiden,
Who, dash'd to hell, went up to God,
With wordless anguish laden ;

Written in London while the old year was being “ rung out.”

Who, tried by keener pangs than fire,
 Rose bright in sacrifice,
 An incense like the flowers of earth,
 A glory like the sky's.

And not for them—for they sleep on—
 Remain to writhe and reek
 The thoughts that burn in manhood's heart
 And stain rough manhood's cheek ;

And strike sharp flame in each true breast
 That beats with English life,
 And speed the spirit o'er the sphere,
 And speed it to the strife.

Oh, let them pass, those writhing thoughts
 That haunt the long night-watches,
 And cry for God's own vengeance still,
 And chide its slow, dark marches.

Yet shall not *they* from memory pass
 Who calm and cold are lying,
 Who blazon'd England with their blood,
 With light and hues undying.

O, they shall live who died so well,
 Live shrin'd in heart and spirit,
 And after-ages far away
 Their glory shall inherit,

Till Greece forget the Greeks that lie
 Where Asian hosts were riven,
 And till the sea of Salamis
 Shall glass no star of heaven,

Till in the East shall pale and sink
 Yon star of England's might,
 Which now shall rise with meteor-orb
 And soar with eagle-flight.

Shine, star of England, in thy strength
 Far o'er her world of waves ;
 Shine splendent on the brighter green
 Of yon far English graves.

Strike light and fire, strike fiery light,
 Far into future time,
 Far as when constellations new
 Shall smite our Boreal clime ;

When Vega,* thron'd in polar state,
 Shall burn in Arctic heaven,
 And the Four splendours of the Cross
 Shall to the North be given.

Shine on, and light the lands afar,
 And peoples who shall rise
 When England's name, though not her work,
 Shall cease beneath the skies.

* In 12,000 years.—Humboldt, *Cosmos*, vol. i.

Shine, golden prescience of the dawn,
 Flush'd, fervid with thy mission.
 Shine, bright as dying martyr's hope,
 As prophet's vastest vision.

Shine, through the tears and through the mist,
 Star that art sun to nations;
 And only set when earth shall sink
 And stars forego their stations.

EGERIA.

I.

Was it here, O Muse or Oread,* in the murmurous grove by
 Rome,†
 Or in shades of Alban valley ‡ that the Sabine in his gloom,
 When he wander'd through the loneliness § that the lost had
 left to him,
 Found the dreamt divine one mirror'd in his spirit deep and
 dim?

* "Οραμα Θεῶς τινας ἢ νύμφης ὁρείας. Plutarch. Num. 13.

† Juv. iii. 12.

‡ Ov. Fast. iii. 263. Met. xv. 487. Virg. Æn. vii. 761.

§ Plut. Num. 4.

Are the waters thine, Egeria, in their pure, perennial birth,
Or the flowers that breathe poetic from the holy heart of
earth ?

Is there aught of thee that lingers in the meadow or the rill ?
Is there aught in this blue spring-day that respires Egeria
still ?

II.

It avails us not to question her, or to know her birth or
home,

Whether there, by Nemi's water, or here, by Numa's Rome.
And it is not disenchantment to behold her thro' her beams :
There's a loveliness that lingers in the dying light of dreams.
'Tis the legend that is sacred ; 'tis the fancy that's divine ;
'Tis the tale itself suffices : 'tis a transubstantiate sign :
There is all that heart may thirst for in the poet's mystic
wine.

There was—ah ! there is, no goddess : the grey world has
lost its youth :

And there stands no holy Numa in the presence of the truth.
But there's still for us the poetry, the thing that does not
die—

Earth and air, Italian beauty, the spring-flowers and the sky.
There remain no fair Camenæ ; but the beauty thought
could frame

Is a thing and is enduring, though Carmenta but a name.
Never nymph of dell or mountain has bloom'd to earthly eye ;
Never lady rose from fountain, never voice came from the sky.
Yet is poetry divine, if divine aught here may be ;
And perhaps a power prophetic, and perhaps reality.

III.

Was it then a thing prophetic, then when bards were seers
 who saw,

And, in light of inspiration, "look'd before and after" far—
 Far before them, up the ages, to the Titan times on high,
 Far adown the days unrisen, down the dark, starr'd morning
 sky?

'Twas a power, a Pythian ardour, a consuming flame of
 soul,

In a vast anticipation, in a bound, upon the goal;
 Seizing space and time, beholding all ages* in an hour,
 And evoking echo-music from the heart of unseen Power,
 Ank exploring earth and Hades by the bard's strong spirit
 riven,

And sweeping o'er the skylands, to the shining halls of
 Heaven.

IV.

O Camenæ of Italia, of the ancient faiths that were,
 Ye that yet haunt this fair Italy, this Roman earth and air,
 Ah, Muses! were ye beings, as once ye well-nigh were,
 Ye should yield to invocation, to the deep spell-power of
 prayer.

Of the lore wherewith we dower'd ye when we gave ye spirit-
 life

Ye should cede some lovely secrets to the human spirit's
 strife.

* "Venit ætas omnis"—*etc.* Lucan. *Phars.* v. 177.

How would bard or sage invoke ye, were ye aught he might
 implore
 To reveal the truth and beauty that are veil'd in myths of
 yore,
 To reveal the key, the secret, of the mystery of the world,
 That weighs upon the spirit tho' its wings be wide unfurl'd !
 Ah that voice from grove or fountain might pierce the clue-
 less maze !
 That the elements might answer to the seeker of their
 ways,
 And announce the spell energetic, adaptation or design,
 Of this universal Nature, up to aught that is Divine—
 All the sum, the long, close series of the tale of cosmic time—
 What has been and what shall follow while the spheres their
 cycles chime—
 All the working and the making of the world and of the
 skies,
 Woven forms of subtle forces, endless web of destinies—
 Life, accretion, growth, development, sex, species, soul
 God-given—
 The mystic, the poetic, love, adoration, Heaven—
 All the phases of progression till the heart made heaven its
 sphere,
 Till the sage had his Egeria in the starry midnight here—
 What changes aye are working in the earth and its profound,
 What ceaseless revolution in the stellar world around,
 In the glimmering golden distance, where orbs roll dark or
 bright,
 Ever waxing, ever waning, thro' the changeless infinite—

All the mystery of the multiplex, the fated or the free,
The fates of spheres and spirits—what has been and what
shall be.

V.

O Egeria of the vision ! O born of mind and heart !
Thou that all the lore of royalty to thy lover didst impart,
Is there none, no true Egeria, of earth, or air, or heaven,
To whom a revelation, an utterance, has been given ?
Tell, oh ! tell us, true Egeria, some truths of law and power :
Rise to him who waits thy dawning in the dim world's silent
hour.

Bid him who darkly dreams her awaken and arise,
And see his soul's Egeria and lift to her his eyes.
Tell him what of truth and duty he may stablish strong
and sure,
What of knowledge and of beauty he may see and may
secure ;

He who sees so slow, so little, and who breathes so cold a
clime,

Where he watches, standing, sinking, on the crumbling
verge of Time,

Only seeing that he sees not, that things but shift and seem,
That the world is wasting, waning, with his wasting life
from him,

And that all is girt with darkness and lost in starless gloom ;
Still a wider, deeper darkness as the limits wider loom ;
Still a deeper depth of darkness as the bounds of sight expand,
While the night when no man worketh descends o'er all the
land.

VI.

Oh thou dream of an Egeria ! be reality at last :
 Be there yet some revelation, tho' the day of dreams be past.
 Tho' the truth of things be searchless, and all that may be
 known
 Must be sought in science only, in Nature's ways alone,
 Tho' the many golden key-thoughts be reserved for workers
 slower,
 Yet, oh ! yet, be something ceded to the poet's lawless power.
 Let the hope forestall the ages and antedate their gains,
 And high o'erleap the thinker left to perish in his pains.
 Let it overtake the toilers with its subtle fire and light,
 With the force and with the fleetness of fire of Heart bedight ;
 And thread the maze of mysteries with an intuition sure,
 And traverse trackless starlands and the starless void obscure,
 And career beyond the cycles that measure spirits' time,
 And beyond the grave of Nature, if it ken another clime,
 Far beyond the world of elements, the change of forms, the
 play
 Of forces, forms of motion that own'd but Fate's self-sway.

VII.

Oh the fair, fond, fled Religions, that have gone as
 shadows go,
 Dream of Naiad, Muse, and Oread, of Egeria's midnight
 glow !
 O beheld in moonlight beauty beneath the mystic shade,
 How ye pale as golden Morning gleams arrowy down the
 glade !

How ye fade and fleet and vanish at the stern uprise of
Thought !

Be, then, Thought the Truth redeeming all the ruin it has
wrought.

Give us, Thought, the truths that Fancy does but image on
a stream ;

Shew us broad and bright the story of the ancient ages
dim,

Of the mighty past of nations, of the old Italic days,
Tale of Ligur, Umbrian, Oscan, of Ausonia's primal race,
Whose times had past from memory ere we fabled Saturn's
birth,

Who have perish'd, if aught perish ; who were men and
who are earth—

Tale of wide Pelasgian wanderings, of vast Pelasgian walls,
Of dark Etruria's marvels, her buried and their halls,
Of the rush from Rhætian valleys over lands of corn and wine,
Of the Sabine and the Latin, the arx, the Palatine,
Of unspelt brazen archives, of trackless Tyrian sails,
Of Alban hills and forests, Sicilian shores and vales,
Of many a fameless hero, of many a nameless king,
Of many a maiden's musings where Egerian waters spring.

VIII.

Thou that sweep'st the soul of poet as the master smites
the lyre,

Be thou more than thought, strong Spirit ; Aspiration,
grasp thy fire ;

From the spirit weave a body, charge the cloud with flame
and force,

Give the poet-heart puissance, give it conquest, give it
course.

Bring a waking to our dreaming ; of our winter make a May
Like this bright resurgent verdure, this divine Italian day.

Be the herald, be the presence, of the long'd-for loftier life :
Let a vernal resurrection dawn o'er all the world of strife.

Bear afar the thoughts of thinkers who have far outsped
their time ;

Bear them on, across the ages, to some clear, genial clime.
To the true ones, who to true thoughts may strength and
growth afford,

Bear the prophecy, the promise, that has long for them
been stor'd.

Bear the thoughts that rose in silence from a source in
some dim dell

When the thinker's soul sat brooding by the bright
Egerian well ;

Where he mus'd on past and future, and seem'd to see
within

What the beauty, what the knowledge, that the afterdays
may win,

What the power that once from Nature shall be won by
stress of thought,

What the power of heart and spirit, and the work that shall
be wrought,

What the one and true religion of a "glorious liberty,"*

* *Rom.* viii.

If ever a religion one and pure and sure shall be ;
What shall still endure of buried love when yet ten
thousand years
Shall have set on mortal passion in the mist of human
tears ;
What thoughts of an Egeria may in varying forms remain
When he that watched her waters shall long unknown have
lain.

THE MARTYR.

—“pertinaciam certe et inflexibilem obstinationem”
—Plin. *Epist.* x. 97.

I.

“ Then, to-morrow to the lions ;—let the red arena shake
With the fiercer roar of thousands, who the Christian’s soul
 would break,
With the yell of hate and triumph, that shall rend the sky
 for him
Who shall gaze on things of glory as the things of earth
 grow dim.
So, to-morrow, in the noon-glare, I fall that I may rise ;
And to-morrow e’er the starlight and the dews of Paradise.

Fare thee well, then, thee, the fairest of our fair Ionian clime,
Of the flowers that bloom for Heaven in the tearful vale of
Time.

We have liv'd our hour of love-light : thou hast bless'd me,
and I go :

Let us think that He shall lead us where the living waters
flow.

Live—it is thy lot—live, yielding the pure incense of thy
life.

I to Christ my God go glorious, as a warrior through the
strife.”

II.

“ I can go with thee, my warrior:—that I can and that I shall.
Yet, oh! yet, would I thus hold thee, ere by such a fate we fall.
I would think that yet for us, yes, for us, might life rise
bright,

In a realm beyond the Roman, in a land of purer light.

Oh ! our life was sweet and holy, when our spirits free could
rove

In the lovely lore of Hellas, in the lovelier lore of love.

Oh ! the flowery world is fairer, and the starry sky is higher,
Than the gloom and glow of deadly faith, that makes of
earth a pyre.”

III.

“ Would, O God of my salvation, would that myriad lives
were mine

So might I to Thee outpour them, as didst Thou for sinners
Thine !

Thou, the Victim—Thou, the Victor, Thou has bid me rise
and come ;

Take, oh ! take us to Thy bosom, where the weary find their
home.

Thou, that here to me are dearest, and art this world's only
worth,

Would'st thou win from Him His ransom'd, win me back
from heaven to earth ?”

IV.

“ Oh, if thou wert leading onward, for right and truth to die.
If for freedom, if for Hellas, would I stay thy step ? would I ?
O my hero ! I would deck thee, and our sires should give
the wreath,

They that kept the straits of Cæta against the Mede till death,
They that made their grave a landmark by the mountains
and the sea,

And that made their blood-bought Marathon a watchword
for the free

That shall rise beyond the mountains and shall spread
beyond the wave,

Till the skies forget their splendours and mankind forget
the brave.

For the cause of ancient honour, for a hope of glories gone,
I would bid thee pour thy best blood, as freely as my own.

But, for this thy faith—oh ! tell me, dost thou read it
writ on high ?

Look ! the stars of God are shining—there's scripture in
the sky.

O! His world is not Judea, not the thing that sects decree;
 Not so dark and not so strait as yon Essenian Galilee.
 In the sunbright sky of Hellas, in the heaven of poet-
 thought,
 There's a wide and fair religion, there's a sense of God
 untaught.
 We may cast some grains of incense on an altar humbly
 rais'd
 To the God Unknown of Athens, whom the Greek has
 lov'd and prais'd,
 To the bright superne ideal, by what name soe'er it shine,
 To the universal Father, to the Lord of light divine.
 They, the Jove that smiles in summer-day, the Apollo
 Jove-endued,
 They are not cold, gloomy demons sworn to covenants of
 blood.
 Thou may'st think a thought in honour of the glorious
 Titan Bound
 On the Calvary of Imaus with gazing gods around,
 Of the bearer of the life-light, the champion of our race,
 And of him, the far-borne* Saver, whose coming brought
 release,
 Him, the victim-victor hero of the zodiac-splendent toils,
 Him who smote and spoil'd the lion and dissolv'd the
 dragon's coils,
 Him, the God-like man, most mighty, who his anguish
 quench'd in fire,
 From the mountain-altar rising to the seat of Jove his sire."

* See Bacon, *Wisdom of the Ancients*, Prometheus.

V.

" Would'st thou mate the names of idols, things of hollow
 phantasy,
 With the God who spake from Sinai and who came as man
 to die,
 Came among us, wept the sleeper where the tears of sisters
 fell,
 Sat and pour'd His living truth by the deep Samaritan well ;
 Who was seen of eyes adoring as He rose, Who rose and
 reigns,
 And has left His quickening Spirit, and in spirit still
 remains ? "

VI.

" He was good and he was holy, and his heart was pure and
 high ;
 And he taught the truth he gather'd, and he died as true
 ones die.
 He arose against the priesthood and the rule of form that
 kill'd ;*
 And they killed him, and he perish'd for the good he gave
 or will'd.
 And he lies in earth, and passes, while his thoughts roll
 thron'd sublime :
 And the tale of that ascension was a tale of sequent time.
 'Twas but in the hours ' fulfilled ' of begirt Jerusalem
 That evangelists remembered what the gone had told to
 them.

* " The letter that killeth."

'Tis but now that myth and mystic have transfigur'd in
 their haze
 To a God the nobler manhood whom as Son his Paul would
 praise—
 Son—'for we too are the children,' of his Father and his
 God—
 'First,' we say, 'of many brethren,' and co-heir of empire
 broad."

VII.

"Stands He not in starry splendour o'er the world which
 He has won,
 In the glory of the Father, with whom the Son is one?
 Sec'st thou not the equal Saviour as Creator beaming bright?
 Shine, O God of God! upon her—let her see Thee in Thy
 light."

VIII.

"O! believe it, we may raise us to the godlike e'en as man.
 We can rise beyond the mortal: thou can'st that, and
 woman can.
 Never nobler, holier nature may have sprung of David's line
 Than the freedman Epictetus, than Aurelian Antonine,
 Than the Greek who died bequeathing to his Plato and all
 time
 Thoughts that light the soul like prescience of its destiny
 sublime.
 Man has earth and sky before him; he has strength and he
 has scope;
 And his future shall be fairer than the Promised Lands of
 Hope.

Be thou what thou art : forget not thy divine humanity.
 Rise beyond yon dark Moriah ; live the life that is for thee.
 Do we honour to the *true* God, or to one who by Him
 wrought,
 When we deify ideals and ordain what He did *not* ?”

IX.

“ What be human, heathen virtues, and the vain self-
 strength of man ?
 What avail yon few weak twinklers ? would they lead the
 Morning’s van ?
 God hath come, and light lies dawning o’er the dim world’s
 heaving sleep,
 As Elohim’s brooding Spirit o’er the waters of the deep.
 He hath come to break down idols, and to quell the pagan’s
 pride,
 And to bear good-will and blessing to all hearts of will allied.
 And he died in glorious darkness, quenching yon great sun
 in blood ;
 And to Him shall die His martyr, and in Him shall rise
 renew’d.”

X.

“ There’s a truth, a deep and solemn, that in that faith
 seems to dwell,
 And inspires a now new impulse flowing far with spring-
 tide swell,
 And may touch the heart of suffering, and may seem to
 bring release ;
 And the worn and weary bow them, and sink and dream of
 peace.

But 'tis still, alas ! too human : it is not aught divine,
It is mixed with human falsehood, and shall wane, and
cease to shine.

And the noble once and vivid shall effete and faint be seen,
And become but as the faiths that have long religions been.
And the children of the ages all too soon, too well shall see
How belief may grow idolatrous and a bloody tyranny.
And the city of the Cæsars shall enshrine it and shall dower,
As a thing of state imperial, and ascribe to it her power.
And at last—oh ! very weary, men shall find the far-off Cause,
And shall see their God through Nature, and their Sinai in
its Laws,

And a glorious revelation in the truths that Time shall yield,
And the Logos* in Experience—so, and only so, revealed."

XI.

"Art thou, *thou*, the evil prophet ? dost thou darken
counsel thus ?

Must I curse thee, who must bless thee ? must my God,
Who hears, curse us ?"

XII.

"Oh ! I fear it ; but it shall not, and it cannot, Him belie,
Cannot fail or rot if real—by its fruit we it may try—
Cannot *but* be warp'd and blighted if of godless growth it be,
Rome shall show if God be with her, and the martyr'd
world shall see.

Reason. Oersted, *Soul in Nature*, The Spiritual in the Material.

And when Rome shall sink from state-strength, Faith shall
 sink, and in all vain
 Cast across the rising waters the broken links of chain.
 She may scourge, but shall not bind, them when the arm of
 flesh shall fail her,
 And the Truth shall come unclouded, and man at last shall
 hail her."

XIII.

"I have truth in God's great mission to the world of sin
 and lies.
 'Tis the holy lore of Suffering, 'tis the creed of Sacrifice.
 'Tis the faith and strength of martyrs when they perish
 unsubdued.
 Wilt thou doubt the truth they witness when they seal it
 with their blood?"

XIV.

"O ! I know that to the noble, to him whose heart's on high,
 To the warrior, to the martyr, it is not much to die ;
 That the soul has exaltations when the presence of a Thought
 Makes the world and time as shadows, turns the sense of
 Self to nought.
 Men will die for anyfancies, for each cause, though but a word ;
 They will die as well for idols as can Christian for his Lord.
 Myriad martyrs to thy Martyr shall die well, in many an age,
 As the thousand *for* him perish by the present pagan's rage.
 There shall long be willing martyrs who for only truth shall
 look
 Down their shatter'd lives of trial, and nor bribe nor threat
 shall brook ;

Who in lone and brave long-suffering shall—O ! *not* as
 Christians—bear
 Hate of priests and scorn of people proud its chains of lead
 to wear,
 And the grief of friends and dearest, taught to shrink from
 all lov'd best,
 And perhaps the curse in dying—but it shall not reach
 their rest.”

XV.

“Must I curse thee in my dying?—let the Christian’s
 curse be this—

To behold him die as martyr, and to hope a death like his,
 And to love his Christian memory, to remember that he
 died

In the strength of God his Glory, of Christ the Crucified.
 Go, and live a life of lyrics in thy dreams of heathen Greece.
 Go, and gain the height of Plato : try if *that* will yield thee
 peace.

Take thy flowers, and bear them votive to thy dim Lucretian
 gods :

See if *they* will give thee answer from their echoless abodes.
 See if yon cold soul of Nature will accord response to thine
 When thou seek’st her in thy sorrow, when thy chill’d heart
 owns decline.

Think if *she* will lull its throbbings to a sleep as sweet as
 theirs

Whom the love that passeth woman’s to the Father’s bosom
 bears.”

XVI.

“Now the last dark day is looming along the blood-streak’d
sky ;

And we leave the world its mystery, its gloom and glare,
and die.

Shall not Nature fair enfold us, though we gain no grave in
Rome ?

Shall not One receive His children in His universal home ?”

THE DREAM OF PILATE'S WIFE.

Dare thou not to deal on him
Whom I met in vision dim,
With a presage, with an awe—
Him whom in my sleep I saw,
Him whom in my dream I felt,
And to whom my spirit knelt.

Many things I suffered there,
In that heavy midnight air.
Many woes of One apart
Came upon me, crushed my heart—
Shames and sorrows, toils and pains—
Meed that bold and true one gains—

Striving still for others' good,
 Still by them and hell withstood ;
 Hunted to the hills and rocks,
 To the homes of kite and fox ;
 Haunted in the deadly gloom
 By the evil ones that come
 With the sense of coming doom ;
 Where his very soul, one wound,
 Wept hot blood upon the ground ;
 Sold, betray'd to priestly hate,
 Scourg'd and borne to felon's fate.

And I heard that agony,
 And I heard that last, loud cry.
 And I felt the darkness fall
 O'er the dying God, his pall.
 And I felt the earthquake's tread,
 Felt the earth give forth its dead.

Earth shuts o'er him : him they lock
 In the darkness of the rock.
 Oh the black abysm of death !
 Oh the formful void beneath !

And I felt the third day's rise,
 Felt the air and felt the skies.
 And I throb'd with some strange strife
 In some agony of life ;
 Borne beyond our mortal sphere,
 Hearing things that spirits hear.

Oh ! I suffered many things.
 Years and ages spread wide wings

Darkly onward, and I saw
 Things of horror, things of awe.
 All reviv'd in Roman power,
 Yon Jew Priesthood rul'd the hour,
 Rul'd the world in Name divine,
 Made that very name a sign
 Of whate'er is most malign.
 And I felt the long, strong strife
 Of the heart for its true life—
 Pangs of brain and spirit riven,
 Yearnings for the day of Heaven,
 Hopes forlorn of noble will,
 Still on-striving, baffled still ;
 While the churchmen and their kind
 Trail'd through all the breadth of mind,
 Coil'd around the world's young heart,
 Wrung it, pierc'd it as with dart,
 Pierc'd it through with lethal lore,
 Striking poison to its core.
 Oh ! I felt the pang that grew,
 Like the Titan's ever new,
 In the heart of Him the true,
 While He writh'd, still crucified
 By the priests of hate and pride.

And I sank. That darkest night
 Own'd at last some lines of light :
 Some slow signs of some new vision
 Dawn'd along the far horizon.
 And I started from my sleep,

From that dreaming wild and deep ;
And I woke with “ Is it so ?”

And the tumult rang below—
Clang of arms and harsher cry,
And the priest-taught “ Crucify !”
And I saw—I see it now—
That broad, pale, heroic brow,
That calm sphere of heavenly light,
Gemm’d with heavy blood-drops bright.
And I shrank, with hands in vain
Clasp’d across my eyeballs’ pain,
Press’d upon the visual brain.

I have suffer’d : hear thou me :
Suffering bears me up to thee.
Not on us be that pure blood :
He is holy, he is good.
Shall it fall for priestly greed ?
Roman, be not thine the deed.
Leave to Jews the crime and curse.
Be not thou their tool and worse.

Rather, Roman, lay thine hand
On that altar rais’d to stand
Undefil’d within the breast—
Heart of Roman, not of priest :
Vow thee there to duty : there
Thou thine oracle shalt hear.
Be thou noble as thou art :
O my Roman ! act thy part.
Bid yon priests and other base

Crouch before him, crave his grace.
 Comes he not their promised King ?
 Is not Right the royal thing ?
 Doth not Suffering's wisdom gain
 Sovereign strength and grace to reign ?
 I have suffer'd : I have learn'd
 Many things, and something earn'd.
 I have spoken : hear thou me.
 He is just : be thou as he.

THE DAMSEL POSSESSED WITH A SPIRIT OF DIVINATION.

"Ἡ τίς οἱ εὐξαμένη πολυνάργητος θεὸς ἦλθεν
 Οὐρανόθεν καταβὰς, ἔξει δέ μιν ἅματα πάντα.—*Odysss. Z' 280.*

What is this, that o'er my soul
 Comes with some supreme control ?
 Wherefore faints my spirit now ?
 What is this ? and who art thou ?
 Art thou That we look'd to see ?
 Art thou That ?—oh ! art Thou He ?
 All that ever earth could feel
 Seems evanish'd, seems unreal—

All illusion, as the haze
 Gold and purple to the gaze ;
 As the gleams of cloudland grey
 Heralding the King of Day.

Art thou sunk, oh ! Light of mine,
 Oh ! my Lord and Love divine ?
 Dost thou leave me lorn below ?
 Oh my Delian ! dost thou go ?
 Art thou gone, with all thy glory,
 Bright through shrine and song and story—
 All thy far-felt inspiration,
 All the dire and glorious passion ?
 Whither fleets, that glow'd so high,
 That infus'd divinity ?

What is this within my breast ?
 Is there sun-rise in the west ?
 Is there other day below ?
 What is this my vision now ?

Are the fair and bright ones fled ?
 And is Pan the Mighty dead ?
 And is One who died arisen ?
 And is earth no more our prison ?
 And is He the Life and bearer
 Of a new light, brighter, fairer,
 Bringing from his Sabbath rest
 Day that wanes not in the west,
 Bringing from the depths he won
 Day that dies not with the sun—
 To the weary world he trod

Bringing ransom, bringing God—
 To the bound the spell “Be free”—
 Light to darkness, hope to me?
 Is it—shall it once be so?
 Is there God? and shall I know?
 Hath He sent? and hath He spoken?
 Shall the sunless gloom be broken?
 And is she that lay in night,
 Yearning for the dreamt one bright,
 Touch’d at last by One afar,
 Once at last oracular?

NEVER MORE.

That one thought!—it gleam’d, and it is over.
 In one hallowed hour of night it rose:
 In the starry night it seemed to hover,
 Buoy’d with brightness, in the blue repose.

That one thought—that fancy fairest, fleetest!—
 Shall I ever dream that dream again?
 I will dream of some deep sleep and sweetest,
 In this world-isle, or beyond the main.

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There I lay, with Plato's words immortal ;
 And the Dying, in the sunset* bright,
 Spake with friends of hope beyond the portal
 Where we pass from dreamy day to night.

And I strayed among the thoughts they pondered
 In the poet-thinker's purple ev'n ;
 And the world wan'd from me as I wandered ;
 And I sank, and then I woke in heav'n,

By the deep, calm flow of Life unbroken ;
 Then I dreamt that dream that comes no more.
 Do I dare remember things unspoken,
 Things nor seer nor mystic may explore ?

'Twas the spirit's sabbath† : I was spirit ;
 Rais'd, ennobled, thought-spel'd to the goal.
 She had made me worthy, giv'n me merit,
 Borne me to her own bright sphere of soul.

I reveal not——O ! but I remember——
 What that angel of my rest reveal'd.
 Oh, my spirit's angel ! is the chamber
 Of that mystery now for ever seal'd ?

Oh ! she told me——Would we turn the pages
 Of a story worn with tear and kiss ?
 I unlearn'd the bitter lore of ages ;
 I forgot the truth that was and is.

* Plat. *Phaed.* 65.

† "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." —*Rev.* i. 10.

All the past was past ; the long year lonely—
 All was then unreal, forgotten then.
 She, her own self, not that image only,
 All the blessing of my life had been.

She had seen that sunset, breath'd that morning,
 Stray'd or sat where I but thoughts had found—
 In the wood-walks at the violet's dawning,
 By the fire-light, with the books around—

Far within the ringing woodlands roaming
 In the flowery childhood of the year—
 In the wasted woodlands deep at gloaming,
 When I trod the storm-swept oak-leaves sere.

She had dwelt on looks of buried faces,
 On the old home-memories, bright or dim ;
 Dwelt in calm on things of time that passes,
 On the Future in a glorious dream.

We had look'd and listen'd (" *we* "—I hear her !)
 Through the ages, far as when, by night,
 Hearts beat thick as heavy hoofs struck nearer,
 Bearing blood-dye of the Bosworth fight—

Far as when the immemorial mountains,
 Darkening now on ruins by the lake,
 Breath'd wild echoes to the bard's recountings—
 Ancient music, such as mountains make—

When the dragon-banner, gleaming, glowing,
 Ages ere the thronging leopards sprang,
 Shook old splendours o'er the burst of Awen,
 And the steel at fiery harpings rang.

* * * * *

She had paced my paths, at her sweet pleasure.
 She had breathed fair Florence that first hour,
 When loud midnight shook the starry azure,
 Clanging from the mighty marble tower.

She with me had strayed where I but sought her.
 I with her to each sought spot had come ;
 Wandered by that wide Volsinian water,
 Won that height, and gazed, and uttered "*Rome !*"

* * * * *

All a life—but soon to set, and never,
 In this life, to dawn again on me.
 While I——It was over, and for ever ;
 And the deep, dull bell was beating three.

Through the twain wide open windows streaming,
 Flow'd the moonlight, mix'd with dewy dawn :
 From the garden, half in moonlight gleaming,
 Floated odours of the summer morn.

All the mighty city round me slumber'd—
 Not a sound among the millions all,
 Save the throb of tidal Thames, that number'd
 Full pulsations, surging on the wall.

* * * * *

This, then, this is what my waking owes me !

'Tis for this I wake to earth and skies.

This is what the light of morning shows me—

That the one thought never more shall rise.

That one thought, which once shed moonlight o'er me—

That thought never shall depart, or wane :

It shall ever smile its gleam before me :

And it never shall seem real again.

* * * * *

I, that wasted years in desert fancies,

Yet may find some impulse high and pure,

While the age with orient God advances,

Now discerning purpose grand and sure.

And whate'er of good may bless my doing,

Following late where once my strong will trod,

Shall be done, if not within her viewing,

Yet done *for* her, votive as to God.

* * * * *

So decreed !—a void of time and distance.

Man must nerve his heart till time be o'er,

Steel it to the stern truths of existence,

Dream, or murmur dreamings, never more.

L A K E.

That time lies calm in memory now : that time,
With all its troubled moments, mirror'd true,
But only mirror'd, only to one sense
Existent ; like a fair-spread mountain-side
Seen broad upon the bosom of a lake :
All imag'd there distinct—the lights and shades,
Green mosses, and grey rocks—there the white rage
Of waterfalls in all their passionate force,
But silent there ; seen only : all seen there—
E'en lightest clouds, and subtlest, fleetest hues,
Like Fairyland's, like fancies——all lie there—
Near, yet remote, exact, and yet unreal,
In that new hemisphere, that other world.

S E A.



That life lies now before me like an isle
Where inland traveller, ever and anon
Some wide low level passing, or some height
Attaining, sees the blue circumfluent sea,
Between bold headlands or along the coast ;
Oft but a moment : the far convex blue
Still lost, still unbeheld : so lies that life,
Seen maplike, in a broad, circumfluous deep
Of love—love oft evanishing and oft
Forgotten, and still there, still th' element
Wherein life lies : life some mid-space between
The blue of heaven and mingled hue of love.

“THIS LONGING AFTER IMMORTALITY.”

Hark ! from far off, adown the mountain side,
 Comes, wafted soft, the choral homeward song ;
 Now nearer, streaming on with gentle tide,
 Bears the blent spirits of the happy throng.

It sinks, it swells ; now seems to fall, to fleet ;
 Now, rising, floats among the whispering trees.
 —Yes ! 'tis the Sabbath morrow's hymn, and sweet
 As Ave Mary borne o'er Southern seas.

What, while the simple Sabbath song flows by,
 Breathes here—a sense that a religion makes—
 A sadness, like the air of even's sigh,
 A sweetness, like the incense that it wakes ?

What swells within the heart, and seems to rise
 As with the angels' song in happy dying,
 Then, from the full heart ebbing to the eyes,
 Dwells on the deep earth, where the gone are lying ?

Is it some heaven-born instinct, some true token,
 Sense, earnest, pledge, of immortality,
 Of some far Sabbath lands where dwell unbroken
 This summer beauty and these thoughts of thee ?

I dreamt, fair girl, of thee and love of thine ;
 And in that dream I woke from visions vain,
 From all I had dreamt ere thee I could divine ;
 And then I woke indeed :—'twas earth again.

I thought, Though she should love me, I must die ;
 And she too, she must pass as pass her flowers,
 And with the lilies and the violets lie,
 And wait the Voice that wakes the vernal Hours.

If she should love me, I should die so soon,
 And she would never know how lov'd she was.
Was!—Is this instinct but a fancied boon ?
 And sinks this sense with yon sweet singers' pause ?

Flow forth again, sweet singing—back to me.
 Flow, sweet, sad thoughts that dwelt on her and fate.
 Rise, dream of her and immortality ;
 And linger with me while my night I wait.

FLUX AND REFLUX.

It was golden autumn evening, and I wander'd by the waters ;
 And on either side of ocean stretched the wavy mountain
 coast ;
 There a dream of far-off Idris, and the blue Silurian borders,
 Here the hills of Lley'n and headlands, there the great
 Snowdonian host.

And I watch'd the throbbing waters in their heaven-impell'd
emotion :

And they flow'd, and they receded, and they still came
on to me.

And I bade my fancy teach me that the world is as the
ocean,

As the ocean in its on-flow, as the constant Pontic sea.*

And it was but flux and reflux—all but change and oscillation ;

And to-morrow morn the sea-bed shall lie bare and dry
and drear.

And I saw that all around me is but mutiplex vibration,
Play of impulse, play of forces woven dark in heaven and
here.

Then the choral stars met o'er me, like angels earth desecrating :

But I knew the stars were shifting, rising, sinking, with
the hours ;

And I knew that worlds are cloudlands, waxing, waning,
born and dying,

In the golden hanging-gardens as on earth the sheeny
flowers.

* —“ the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er keeps retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont.”

And I saw that all is wheelwork, cycle-fluxion, alternation,
 Nothing constant, nothing stable, in the whirl of earth
 and sky.

And I anchor'd in the one thought that my being's con-
 summation

Is to love thee as I love thee and to love thee till I die.

PARTANT POUR LA SYRIE.

I.

So, Fate, or circumstance and thoughts that are,
 And should be, strong as Fate—Truth's, man's right
 pride—

Decree it—yes! I hear: Forego; forget!
 What care?—perhaps it is but one life lost.
 Therefore, farewell. Farewell, farewell, at last.

II.

Farewell; but no forgetting—not till life
 Ebbs with the dearer memory of thy voice,
 Thy look, thy love. Nor yet farewell to this
 Yet lingering thought that there, that *there*, beyond
 This fitful flow and staunchless ebb of life,
 That memory yet may gleam, an ocean-light,
 Along some palm-crown'd new-Atlantic shore,
 Far in the setting spirit's kindling West.

III.

Shall I forget ? Can I, in life or death,
 Forget that sweet fair face, that tender voice,
 That grace of goodness and poetic mind ?
 Shall I forget that beamy, parting look,
 Those murmur'd words, that pressure, soft and warm,
 Of thy frank, priceless hand ? When I forget,
 When I forego that impress, which I wear
 So deep within, of thy pure nature's charm,
 When I forget thee, whom so well I know
 Gentle as true, nor steadfast less than sweet,
 Then, cease all memory, cease all thoughts of love,
 Of truth, of beauty ! fade, fair earth and skies,
 And let me lie where never flower shall dawn,
 Nor star of midnight gleam, nor star of morn !

IV.

To see thee is to know : the limpid look
 Reveals the mind ; the sweet voice breathes the soul.
 To know thee is to love : and to love *thee*
 Is to be thine from that first hour. Not once,
 Since I beheld thee as thou art, not once
 Has sun gone down on day unvisited
 By thoughts of thee ; nor once has morn arisen
 On me from night that has not imag'd thee.
 In the great city, in the palace-halls,
 In the day-din, and in the starlight lull,

How oft, self-still'd some moments, have I heard
 Thy low voice-music, and with answering eye,
 Unmark'd, averted from the scene as clos'd,
 Seen that fair face before me, seen but thee !
 When the worn mind has own'd world-weariness,
 Or in the tumult of the senses laps'd,
 How oft have those pure tones, that starlight look,
 Breath'd, beam'd upon me, and reviv'd, relum'd
 Some hopelike thoughts of better things and higher,
 Sweet as thy sweetness, thoughts like love of good,
 Like love of God—lov'd then, perhaps, in thee !
 When, at late even, in the land of hills,
 The pines rose dark against the pale, calm West,
 And the great oaks, spread o'er the dewy grass,
 And when the moon went low behind the tower,
 And all was stillness like a buried heart's,
 It was with thee I walk'd, with thee stray'd forth,
 Far forth in dreams of beauty and of love,—
 With thoughts of thee came back to long unrest.
 It was by light of love, by light of thine,
 I saw, methought, the mystery of the world,
 God's governance, God's spirit, interfus'd,
 Made manifest ; and saw, or felt, through thee
 Some mortal mystery sacred and sublime,
 Some mingled memories, lovely, dark, divine,
 Of Bethany and of Gethsemane—
 Some faith found beauteous as beheld in thee.

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V.

—Might I?—Perhaps—Shall I repent me, then?
 Not so! though now, to-night, perhaps, to-night—
 Not so—though—yes! I could achieve a crime,
 And bear a curse, for thee. I could not do
 That wrong. No baseness for a heart that's thine!
 Therefore I lose. And this is well—even this:
 And I die true, true to myself and thee.
 'Tis well. To live for thee were heaven indeed;
 But farewell heaven! And now I feel, I know,
 That I can say "*I love*"—thou little know'st
 With what a love. Farewell! I will not be
 Yet more unworthy, and I will die true.

VI.

'Tis o'er; "then, wed thee to an exile's lot:"
 "Why turn, why linger, why look back, my heart?"
 "'Tis done: all words are idle." Even here
 I am but exile: 'tis my fathers' home,
 But "not my rest." And now I wander forth,
 To bear that image over lands and seas,
 As founders bore their household deities,
 But never more to shrine it in a home.

VII.

But I shall bear it shrin'd within my heart,
 Bright in the dark, true charm and talisman,
 Far over earth and ocean. Stars shall rise
 In unfamiliar signs, and set, while I
 O'er southern seas that sweet star-image bear
 Which shall not set.

VIII.

I turn again to thee,
 Oh, "Paradise of exiles, Italy!"
 Again my steps, at pensive pace, explore
 Etruscan cities, and my faltering thoughts
 Their dateless days of old. I stand and gaze
 On mysteries of the past eternity
 In wide Tarquinii's field, and, hewn in rock,
 Far up that valley* of the dustless dead.
 I sit, and seem to sit and speak with *her*,
 At Baiæ, at Sorrento, and on *her*
 I muse at Pæstum while the moon glides white
 Through the great temples of Italian Greece;
 On *her*, still *her*, when from Ægina's height
 I looked tow'rd Athens, Corinth, Salamis.

IX.

Before I once—if ever once—see *her*,
 What beauty, and what sadness, shall I see,—
 Time's, Nature's, man's!—what memories shall I
 trace!
 What waste, what desolation, far and near!
 Ere once again I see *her*, I shall sit
 In Ephesus; and in the desert halt;
 And stray in Tadmor, and in Petra's shades.
 And the wide ruin, and the Arab's wilds,
 Shall fade before me while I gaze through space
 And time, and through the heart's drear wilderness,

* Norchia.

There still beholding one fair English girl ;
 Who once, perchance, and yet again, shall turn,
 In gentle musings, to the far-off East.

X.

But on !—To Zion ! I will halt and rest
 Where vow'd crusaders, bearing oft within
 The bleeding, burning heart of earthly love,
 Cast down, not love, but life, and, blood-bright, died
 Champions of Christ, Who died in love divine.

XI.

And thou shalt then lie soft, perhaps in dreams
 Of other love. And I shall sit by night
 In the lone gloom where One, whom angels watch'd,
 Press'd the cold earth with anguish dark as death.
 And I nor kneel nor pray ; but in my heart
 Thoughts not unworthy, thoughts of thee, arise ;
 And thou, the angel, shalt descend on me.

XII.

So shall I stray, so gaze, and dwell on thee,
 And scale the blood-stain'd steps of exile ; so
 Drain the deep bitter chalice, ere again
 I see thee—Shall I ever see thee more ?

XIII.

“ A gentle vision comes by night.”* And then
 I fear I dream. I wake, and she is gone.

* “ A gentle vision comes by night,
 My lonely widow'd heart to cheer.”—LEYDEN.

But the night cometh. I may dream again,
 And wake no more. I seem to see my rest
 In some far land whence none return, where none
 Shall dream of distant heaven and wake to earth.

XIV.

I think we meet no more. I think my fate
 Is fix'd, and that there now is one life lost.
 Therefore, farewell. Let that last word to thee
 Be but the blessing, fare thee well. To God
 I leave thee, my beloved ; then, adieu.
 Leave thou the love, and leave the pain, to me.
 Be blest ; and, if thou wilt, and if 'twere well,
 Forget me—yes, for ever. And for me,
 Enough that I have seen thee, heard thee, held
 Thy gentle hand, and felt its warmth in mine.
 Enough then, if it must, and should, be so.
 And what if *there*, far off, beyond the wave,
 Beyond that Land of Morning which I seek,
 Rise some true Orient, where we wake from dreams ?

MOUNT CARMEL.

In Holy Land ! at last, in Holy Land,
I look from Carmel o'er the mystic realm
Of those high prophets, those deep-seeing seers
Whose open'd eyes beheld the world of God
Behind, within, earth's elements, beheld
Their champion God, Jehovah's bright array,
Th' embattled hosts of Heaven that fill'd with fire
The desert air, and all the mountain side.

I stand on Carmel : they on Carmel stood ;
And in those caves below, within this rock,
Sought refuge from the wrath of priests and kings.

I pass'd through flowery Carmel's blooming wastes,
Through the lush beauty to the bare, bold height,
That, central in a wide horizon, broods
On sea and shore ; and there lie fields of fame ;
And Kishon sweeps, as on that day of arms,
" Kishon, that ancient river." And I look
Forth o'er the western waters ; and I muse,
Far sped, along the many-peopled past.

And now I muse what searchings, subtle, strong,
 Tried those heroic hearts, what thoughts throng'd thick
 In those great minds of old ; what visions rose
 Upon the gaze of men well-styl'd " of God,"
 When seers of Israel, bards of Judah, look'd
 O'er yon dim lands, o'er yon then mystic West,
 O'er the wide world, and through the depths of Time.

And now I turn from blended sea and sky ;
 And now before me lies that Holy Land.
 And I shall tread that land in steps of One
 Who sought it from on high ; and I shall seek
 His Nazareth ; and think I track His path,
 In pensive eve and ardent after-glow ;
 And watch His stars clear-mirror'd in His lake ;
 And hear the roll of Jordan, rushing strong,
 Far heard along the lonely glens and woods.
 And I shall watch by night at Endor, halt
 At noon by Sychem's well : all Holy Land
 Lies now before me ; and before me rise
 High Zion's ramparts, each true pilgrim's goal.

NAZARETH.

He dwelt at Nazareth Who, ere He came
 In mortal guise, yet God, to Galilee,
 Dwelt, Lord of worlds, among the stars of heaven.
 He trod these paths ; He walked among the flowers
 Again re-born in vernal beauty now.
 His eyes beheld these hills, these then to His
 As now to ours. He saw the sunrise break
 There, where this morn it broke. Yon sunset hues
 Glow as beheld by Him. His eyes and thoughts
 Dwelt on the stars of midnight here : His home
There, and still here. He liv'd our life, and here,
 A gentle child, became a man ; and here,
 Man, not of men, long meditated things
 Loftier than man and holier ; and went forth
 Into the world a martyr, born to doom,
 Into the grave a conqueror ; from the grave
 To dawn the day-star of the world's new life,

 Shall not I bear these thoughts from Nazareth,
 His Nazareth, within my wandering heart,
 Far through the days before me ; far, perhaps,
 Into the wider night beyond ; and thence
 Into new lands of morning—all still His—
 Beyond the sunset, and beyond the sun ?

MOUNT TABOR.

Here, on this glorious height, glorious in gaze
 O'er hill and dale and plain, almost beyond
 All else of Earth—'tis here, tradition tells,
 That He, Divine and human, Whose true light
 Shines through the rising ages, and shall shine
 While worlds and stars and constellated suns
 Fulfil their sunless cycles and are quench'd,
 Was once beheld transfigur'd with a light—
 "White," "the white radiance of Eternity"—
 Which shone for earthly eyes; that here He spake
 With those gone great ones who in His bright hour
 Thrill'd in their sleep of death, awaken'd by
 That brightness, as the world by sunrise, rose,
 Came from the grave, spake of His looming fate,
 Spake of the gloom and glory of His path
 To Zion and to death.

So Tabor stood
 Supreme of Earth's great hills, supreme of all
 Her holy heights, enthron'd in long belief.
 Yet was not this the scene: it was not here
 That He, still man, array'd mortality
 In His own light: that fond belief was vain.

So Tabor stands in Nature's beauty, lone,
Discrown'd, disrob'd of lovely legend, bare
To the cold eye of legend-quelling Truth.

Yet is not this, and is not Holy Land,
Her hills and valleys, where He trod and taught,
Is not all earth, which is His world, the scene
Of true Transfiguration ? Is there not
In Him, in words that shall not pass away,
Light that shall bathe, baptize the total world
In holy fire, in wide true knowledge spread
Like ocean's waters ? They to us seem spread
Co-ample with the starry firmament,
And starr'd like heaven ; but that which is, not seems,
Is His true peace, from heart-sought knowledge won ;
That peace the calm that mirrors stars of thought,
Its wide horizon blended earth and heaven.

SORROW WITHOUT HOPE.

Εἶπεν οὖν ἡ Μάρθα πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν · Κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὥστε,—

They pass ; and now the last white plume is gone.
 And now she has look'd her last : there's nothing more ;
 No, not another glimpse ; and not a sound,
 Save the dull bell, that, slow and heavy swung,
 Tolls through the gloomy, rainy autumn ev'n
 From the far churchyard ; where her child shall lie
 While many merry marriage peals are rung,
 And many mothers follow earth to earth.

Last week, that night, when all at length were still,
 She rose from watching, and she went apart,
 Lest he should hear her weep—for when he slept
 She felt her heart give way—she went aside,
 To yield herself a moment to herself,
 To prayer—if wild abandonment of hope
 On earth be prayer—and so, with clasp'd, clench'd hands,
 And flung-forth arms, and all those choking tears
 Pour'd from the bursting, breaking heart at last,
 She cast herself upon the earth, and said

She cast herself on Heaven, and thought she pray'd—
 Pray'd and despair'd : such prayer is but the cry,
 Th' articulate pang, th' extremest utterance
 Of human agony hurl'd up to God.

She pray'd the Heavens—the silent starry sky—
 The cold, stern midnight air—she pray'd her God,
 Once to look down upon her. And the sky
 Look'd, and beheld her with its thousand eyes,
 All tearless, all unpitying—calm and bright.

She pray'd Him but to spare that little life,
 Those little limbs that anguish. She had sinn'd,
 And she would suffer—oh ! forgive such sin,
 If these wild words be blasphemy—but he—
 Oh, yes ! he must have sinn'd, and all was just ;
 But he was yet so young—scarce three short springs,
 And he had suffer'd very much and long,
 And all for sins of hers and not his own ;
 And she too, she had suffered : had she not ?

She pray'd the Power, All-Merciful, All-Good,
 To spare but him—to take her and destroy—
 Life, body, soul—but spare him yet a while.
 He had liv'd so little, seen so little yet
 Of this fair world of God, had known of pain
 So much, and so few pleasures ; scarce had heard
 Of God, whom she would teach him to adore
 And love for all His goodness.

So she pray'd,
 And wept, and pray'd again ; and kneeling seem'd
 To rise ; and seem'd to fling her spirit forth
 Far as the sky ; then seem'd to cast it forth
 Upon the winds.

She ceas'd.

It *was* the wind ;

'Twas *but* the wind.

And then she pray'd again,
 And wildly as the billow beats the rock,
 And vainly as the billow threatens the stars,
 And vainly as the surge of ocean swells
 To Her in heaven who smiles on flux and ebb.
 And vainly as the lone one gazes now
 Down the drear valley, up the drear, dark sky,
 And madly as she gazes down her mind,
 Where now she feels all shaken—all her thoughts,
 Care, hope, and trust—all things of earth or heaven ;
 For now she sees no more, but, stunn'd and blind,
 Reels in the presence of the Fate that here
 Has ris'n before her, black against the light,
 Eclipsing God—Fate, for she dares not deem
 That this her fate is aught of God, of Him
 Whom she so lov'd, Who seem'd to give what Death
 So soon has taken.

She is calm at last.

What more to feel or fear has she whose all
 Is gone for ever, whose one hope lies there
 Where hearts lie still, and know not what they lost ?

Lie still—To-night the chamber will be dark,
 Dark, dark, and still as where he lies to-night,
 Where oh——But peace ! he is not far away.

The night will pass ; the hours will strike their steps
 Across the darkness, and the day will dawn ;
 And we shall rise : the bright new day will dawn
 Upon his grave, and birds and flowers will wake.

No little feet will patter on the floor,
 No silver voice will ring along the rooms,
 Nor down the stair, to greet the merry morn.
 And you may see the playthings scatter'd there ;
 And you may meet some looks that tell of tears,
 Tears spent last night, and swelling tears unshed ;
 And if you speak, there may be answer meet,
 Perhaps in tearful accents, thick and low.

And so shall pass the nights, of one sole hue,
 And so shall come the morrows, born of night——
 To-morrow, and to-morrow, and the rest.
 And friends shall come with comfort made of words,
 And tell her all is well and all is best,
 And tell her that the parted meet again ;
 And all their story, long and trite as life ;
 Nor cease from troubling till the weary rest.

“THIS IS NOT YOUR REST.”*

[A MAUSOLEUM IN A WELSH VALLEY.]

“The thought of death sits light upon the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains.”

—WORDSWORTH.

Where the rippling flood of sunset, gleaming
On the hoar rock-ramparts of the vale,
On the lawny mountains later lingering,
Ebbs, soft splendour, from the inner dale,

Where the mountain-shadows spread the gloaming
Through the greenwood that beholds the lake,
Where the songsters' farewell, echoing, ending,
Leaves the brook to warble to the brake—

There the love-light sank and set that never
Ebb'd or paled till Life deserted Love ;
There those hearts harmonious pause that ever,
Till the chords were snapt, their concords wove.

* Micah iii. 10.

There the light and there the music slumbers,
 Where those hearts lie lull'd in slumbers sweet ;
 There they rest whose dearest thought in dying
 Was that they in that soft sleep should meet.

There they laid him, where he will'd to wait her,
 In the dell where they so oft had stray'd ;
 Thither, when she lov'd no more, they bore her,
 Where her heart she long with him had laid.

And the mountain-shadows softly shroud them,
 And the sunset smiles with morn-like light,
 And for them the birds their love-lays scatter,
 And the brook makes music through the night.

And the moon, upon the mountains rising,
 Still revisits yon deep shadowy glen ;
 And the stars of midnight watch the sleepers,
 And the star of morning comes again.

Far around the faëry dells and meadows
 Rise and spread the dark wilds of the fell ;
 And the silence of the hills enfolds them
 Who in that lone valley sleep so well.

There they rest among the strength and beauty,
 Into holy nature now received ;
 There, among the rocks and woods and waters,
 Where his childhood, where his last he lived.

Here his boyhood chas'd its vagrant fancies,
 Sped by some vague joy in hills and streams ;
 Here proud sorrows, here pale passion wander'd,
 Shadowing all the lovely land with dreams ;

On the downs in summer noontide brooding,
 On the crags that sternly watch the west ;
 From the twilight of the dells beholding
 Blood-red sunsets burning like his breast.

Here on her he mused at noon and even,
 She, like him, still wandering in a waste ;
 She, the long, slow, weary while, revolving
 Nights and day-dreams in a drear unrest.

O'er yon hills, where oft the day's departing
 Glow'd like passion's fiery purple light,
 Darken'd years went down the past's abysm,
 Set in clouds, and sought the land of night.

Rose at last the day-star, rose the morning,
 On the vigil of the prescient heart ;
 Came the day that God for them had garner'd,
 And they met and now no more they part.

Not till Life had Life's best sweetness yielded—
 Rich amends for all their years unblest—
 Not till earth had been to them as Eden,
 Came the warning—" *This is not your rest.*"

Then he went, that deeper vale exploring,
 To the silence where the parted meet ;
 On her lips his spirit's earnest leaving,
 On her bosom lull'd to slumber sweet.

* * * * *

Is it lonely—that green glen of burial ?
 Is it darksome—that still place of rest ?
 Is not earth a world wherein He shineth,
 He whom earth its Easter Morn confess'd ?

As, among the mountains, in the starlight,
 Lies their lake who dream of glassier sea,*
 So, beneath His skies, among His mountains,
 Smiles to Heaven His lake of Galilee.

As, beneath the summer moon at midnight
 Sleeps the hillside where they mused their fate,
 So, beneath the same sweet moon that saw Him
 Once in anguish, sleeps His Olivet.

As the world, now His, though still it slumber,
 Still may dream of dawn because He rose,†
 So the sleepers in the vale‡ may wait Him,
 Wait the hour which HE WHO LIVETH knows.§

* "A sea of glass, like crystal."—Rev. iv. 6.

† "Because I live, ye shall live also." [On a monument in the English burial-ground at Rome ; on another side of which are the words, "*Until the day dawn.*"]

‡ Ezek. xxxvii. 1.

§ Ezek. xxxvii. 3.

GUY GREY.

I.

Guy Grey, a yeoman, and a yeoman's son,
 Own'd one small farm at Ashby Grey : his race
 Time-honour'd there already when Sir Guy,
 Sir Guy de Grey, died well in Holy Land,
 Steeping the Red Cross with his own best blood.
 John Grey, first yeoman of the line, was son,
 Sole son, but scanty heir, of John, last squire ;
 Whose weighty burdens, dowagers and aunts,
 And daughters eight, left little for himself,
 A thriftless, careless, easy, soft good man,
 Wherewith to cope with litigant as strong
 As the great lord who, stirr'd by Lawyer Dicks,
 Made claims, pick'd quarrel, dragg'd him on and on,
 From court to court, and down and down, till Death
 Sign'd judgment, and the lawyers shar'd the spoil ;
 And the great lord was sorry at the fall
 Of the old house, nor less when he beheld
 His own miraculous Bill of Costs, " as 'tween
 'torney and client." One small farm escap'd
 Even Lawyer Dicks, and Guy possess'd it still.

II.

Plain man was he, and humble, meek ; in all
 Externals, merest yeoman ; but a man
 Strong, high, and noble in himself, a man
 In stature, strength, and bearing ; high he bore
 A head for sculptor's study ; high his heart
 As Rome or Sparta, high with that true pride,
 And that alone, which is the stateliness
 Of conscious honour in a Christian man.

III.

Not many stages (these were early days ;
 " Good " George the Third was king) lay Ashby Grey
 From where the village Hampdens and the mute
 Inglorious Miltons, as the poet dreamt,
 Slept in the yew-tree's shade. Of such, perchance,
 Was Grey : perhaps he dreamt it. Be that so,
 Or be it not, he strove, from child to boy,
 From boy to man, for knowledge, for the light,
 And for the power, whereof, within his mind,
 He seem'd to find some earnest. Those few fields
 (He little reck'd his petty heritage ;
 His well-worn books were dukedom large enough)
 He never till'd, but with the rents—so small,
 Yet greater than his wants—was rich and free.

IV.

He wedded early. She, too, was the child
 Of honest people of the soil : she, too,

Gracious, and kind, and good, and dower'd with gifts
 Of mind and body ; and with some small store
 Of yeoman's wealth, small, but sufficing both.
 He lov'd her, and she knew it ; and she lov'd
 Him as such women love such men, albeit
 She knew, or deem'd, that never woman could
 By mortal man be lov'd as was their child
 By that great ardent heart of his, that mind,
 That soul, that strength : she brooded o'er and o'er
 Those words, those texts—that love of *God*—and oft
 Sigh'd, silent, to her own half-boding heart
 “ I fear, I fear, he loves, we love, that child
 Too much, too much.”

V.

The child grew more and more
 A thing of beauty and of joy. And now
 The mind seem'd daily dawning, brighter still,
 And brighter yet, and beaming clearer through
 The fair boy's pure pale face (—“ too pale—*too* bright !”
 Some murmur'd) ; and as Guy bent o'er and scanm'd
 The broad white brow, he seem'd to see, to scan
 A mind that moulds, informs, exalts, sublimes
 Mankind's ; and he, that never for himself
 Had cherish'd an ambition, save desire
 To learn and know, so to possess his soul
 Self-satisfied, in settled wealth of thought,
 Now throb'd and yearn'd for all that might avail

In that young spirit's wide and high career.
 " *He* must see all ; learn all : *he* must not feel
 What *I* have felt, and never yet o'ercome,
 In my blind, feeble struggle, must not strive
 With petty cares like mine, or waste his powers
 As I have wasted powers and years and hopes.
 What can I give you, Willie ?—I will—what ?

VI.

" Then, prayer is heard, and all we ask'd, and more,
 Is granted now ; and now the darling child
 Will learn the tongues—more than Sir William Jones—
 And write like Doctor Samuel Johnson, speak
 Like Mr. Burke, and be—who knows ?—as great
 As that great Earl of Chatham." " And as good,
 Dear Mary, let us hope, as our great Pitt."
 " Oh, yes ! and better, dear, than Mr. Fox."
 A letter from the Indies, letters, too,
 And documents official, partly print,
 From London, notified that by the will
 Of kinsman long oblivious of all kin,
 Now some seven months deceas'd, Guy Grey became
 Possess'd—entitled, rather—terms distinct—
 To all that stock *et cætera*, all those sums
Et cætera, and the rest ; much, but as yet
 Scarce well in hand. Need was that he (or who ?)
 Should go, secure and bring it. Well, he went,
 After long question, long debate, with her,

And with himself, with his own hard-rack'd mind,
And sad, sad heart.

“And when will you come back,
Father? and will you come to me as soon,
As soon as ever you come back? Perhaps,
It will be dark; but, father, wake me then.
Perhaps I shall be fast asleep. I'm sure
I shall be dreaming of you. I shall know
That you are there. I wonder, father, dear,
Where I shall be when you come back again.”
And Willie smil'd, and, smiling, clasp'd him fast,
And held him long; but as he hid his face
Press'd close and closer, sobb'd, and then broke forth
In tears—such flooding tears as only flow
From passionate despair. Such passion seem'd
So strange in that pale child, that they, who bent
Above him, shar'd some strange and secret awe.

VII.

Days went, and weeks, and many months: the breadth
Of half the world between them, those true hearts
Beat with one pulse of love, throb'd, ach'd alike
With cares, and hopes, and fears, and many pangs,
Many and keen, but borne, borne well, or, say,
Borne silent, as the sunset which he watch'd
From far Bengal, with England in the West,
Borne silent as the churchyard grass, where she
Sat oft, with Willie in her arms, at eve.

VIII.

Months, many weary months, went by : no word,
 Came once from India to the wife left lone.
 Word came, indeed, to Ashby Grey, came oft
 As, in those lumbering Georgian days, might be,
 Words of good cheer to darling wife and child,
 Words of bright life, as hers to him, he wrote,
 Were ever : but in vain she watch'd and pined
 For aught of life or cheer. No single line
 Of Guy's, through all those many weary months,
 Pass'd once beyond the careful eyes and hands
 Of Mrs. Blakeway, much respected dame,
 Postmistress sole at Ashby ; nay, some few
 Attain'd such honour as to lie before
 The cold and high, but sharp and curious, ken
 Of man most grand, and more than " Venerable "
 (Though scarce in years : he had but fifty-seven),
 Archdeacon Fuff, the Vicar. That great man
 (Great at all times, in every place and phase,
 Alike, as when in what he pleas'd to call
 " The Service of the Sanctuary " he rear'd
 His bald majestic numskull—bald ? not so ;
 Coarse carrot, paled to turnip, still strove hard
 To shade it, as with moulting cherub's wings),
 That great, good man had had a parlour-maid,
 Now Mrs. Blakeway, grocer's widow, long
 Presiding o'er Grey Ashby's scanty post.
 She had been very young : she now was staid,
 Pious, and false, and spiteful – skittish ? no !

Who ever said so ? Skittish ! Most untrue ;
 And so unlikely ! We repeat that she
 Was staid and pious, as she needs must be,
 Still high in favour where the good alone
 Could hope to tread, the sanctum, where—but hush !

IX.

Both hated Guy and Mary. Guy knew well
 Why Mrs. Blakeway with a bitter hate
 Him hated, and his wife with bitterer. Him
 She had by no means hated years ago,
 Until he prov'd so stupid : he had lov'd
 But once, and then for ever. She, so good,
 Most justly, then, both scorn'd and hated them.
 But the great Vicar, no less great than good,
 Why hated he so mean a thing as Grey ?
 Well, the great churchman, dull and pompous, slow
 Of heart and brain, had yet, full quick and keen,
 The vermin-instinct of the dull, who see
 And feel and hate the brighter ; only see
 And feel to hate ; and think they scorn because
 They feel, or think, themselves are scorn'd : no scorn
 Had Guy for any, save the base or mean ;
 Though true it is—and pity 'tis 'tis true—
 That e'en Queen Charlotte in his eyes was less
 Than his own purring tabby, or his dog.
 Puff'd with the poor, bad pride of weak, mean men
 Whose pride it is *to show it*, and to wound
 Wherever they can make it felt, this priest

Slow strutting in his small, stiff, narrow mind,
 Look'd loftily askance at such a man
 As the plain, quiet, studious yeoman, deep
 In books beyond him and beyond his class,
 As he himself had told him when he came,
 With true respect, some years ago, to ask
 His learned pastor's aid in some Greek text
 Too hard for him : the explanation too
 Would be, so said the Vicar, cold and dry,
 And so withheld it. More, and worse,—though Grey
 Sat weekly at his apostolic feet,
 And meekly listen'd (better to have sat
 In stocks within some pound impounding too
 A brayful ass), though Grey, like all his race,
 Was churchman true (but Christian first : the priest
 Was churchman first and last) and though no taint,
 No trace of sect or schism might be discern'd,
 Or guess'd, the Vicar shook his addled head.

X.

Once, years ago—'twas now five years—when Guy,
 Some few months wedded, was a while away,
 Remote, on business, Mrs. Blakeway's eye
 Fell keenly on a letter to his wife.
 She first withheld it only (lied, of course) ;
 Then, after one uneasy night, made free,
 And with a practis'd hand and no mean skill,
 Prevail'd upon the seal to render up

Sweet secrets. How she flush'd, and paled, and flush'd
 Again, and burn'd, and bit her lip, and stamp'd,
 And crush'd the lover's letter ! On the fire
 (By luck, not burning bright) she dash'd it once,
 But snatch'd it back. That day she read no more ;
 Nor slept that night. Came evil thoughts—her mind
 Was base, and all her nature—on and on
 Came evil thoughts and fancies. Once again,
 Next day, she read ; and then she smil'd, and then
 She took the letter, smooth'd, but all unseal'd,
 To the good Vicar.

XI.

And he read it twice.

XII.

“ Yes, sir : it came just so—quite open, so—
 And is it not a shame, sir, that a man
 Should write such things, and send them to his *wife* ?
 Or e'en to *any* woman, grown or girl ?
 And send them open—all wide open, so—
 I'm sure he only made-believe to seal—
 For any one to read ! Such things ! why, sir,
 I could not half believe my eyes until
 I'd read it four times over—every time
 More shock'd and more. I hope you'll take it, sir,
 And read it over to that wife of his,
 And read her such a lecture on the shame,
 The sin.”

XIII.

The good man smil'd : perhaps his smile
 Was half a wink : among his votaries,
 All feminine, and mostly fools, his smile
 Was quite a spell—so sweet, so sly.

“ Why, no !

She's not the kind of woman I—and he—
 No, Jenny ! no ! And, then, my dear, you see,
 It's not, perhaps, so very certain that
 This letter, which he meant, perhaps, to seal,
 Came quite so open to your hands. I think
 'Twere best to make it right—no doubt you can—
 And let her have it.” “ But, sir, if I can't—
 What shall I do with it ? what *shall* I do ? ”
 “ Always, dear Jenny, always what is right,
 And what you find is prudent ” (here he smiled).
 “ That's the best rule. And if again, by chance,
 You find these open letters, do not come
 With them to me (you know what's right, and know
 That I've no liking for such things), unless
 You find them still so very bad that you
 Require advice and comfort. Now, good night.”

XIV.

So, not one line from Guy to Mary's hands
 Came ever, through the long, long months. That year
 Went down in gloom and silence ; and the next—
 Spring flowerless, summer sunless, so it seem'd—
 That year went too : no word came once from him.

After a while, her letters too were stopp'd,
Read, and then burnt.

XV.

At last, when March was come,
In the third year, came Guy. It was not then
The savage March of normal English year,
Worse than November, or than English May.
The wintry blasts had pass'd, the sweet south-west
Seem'd blent with sunshine in the soft, warm air,
Felt in the new green leaves, in bud and bark ;
Felt in the blood, and breathing to the heart.
The birds were singing ; every spray seem'd rife
With love-song ; children chas'd the butterfly,
And lambs chas'd lambs along the spangled meads.
'Twas sunset, and the glowing west gleam'd bright
Behind the churchyard elms : a parting ray
Shot through the yew, then left it dense and dark
Against the desert sky. Then o'er the scene—
Or was it o'er the heart ?—came some wan shade,
Not sad, or sweet if sad.

XVI.

Guy Grey came home
In that sweet hour : a happy man he came,
Though grave and anxious ; happy, for he came
Home to his own, and bore a buoyant heart,
Long tried, long rack'd, but steadfast, brave, and high,
By nature. Now, far lands and seas o'erpast,

And weary months, and many a risk and chance,
 Safe, sound, a prosperous man and rich, he came
 To Ashby, long his fathers' home, and long
 His and his child's to be ; for he had wealth,
 And Willie should be Grey of Ashby Grey.

XVII.

His house stood nearest on the road by which
 He (walking some short way, for so he chose
 To come alone) approach'd the hamlet ; his,
 A cottage, in a garden all embower'd,
 Stood solitary, scarce in sight of those
 Which, clustering round the church, were Ashby Grey.

XVIII.

He op'd the gate, and mark'd, though passing quick,
 Flowers, shrubs untended, straggling, all forlorn.
 The door was fast, and when he tapp'd and knock'd,
 None came, none answer'd ; sign of life was none.
 But light shone through the window, and he saw
 The cheerful fire, and by it stood one chair.
 Both had gone out, 'twas plain : they could not know
 His coming : when he last had written (vain
 It seem'd to write at all, miscarriage still
 His every letter's fate) he could not know
 What winds would waft him homeward or oppose.

XIX.

He paus'd ; he waited, till the passion grew
 Too strong, and he must seek and know at once.

He rushed away, but found no face until
 (Some moments seeming hours) he found himself
 Under the churchyard porch, and saw some form
 Before him, and would question, but stood mute,
 Another form beholding. It was she.

XX.

Under that yew tree gently heav'd a grave
 Scaree green, but all thick-set with early flowers,
 Pale primrose, faded snowdrops, late so fair,
 And dark pathetic violets, that seem
 Spring's mourning for the child that died in spring,
 So sweet, so meek, and of the holy hue
 Of starry midnight, where we watch the lost ;
 A little grave : the child lull'd there, we thought,
 Might some four, five bright springs, brief springs, have
 bloom'd.

Upon that grave, spread black among the flowers,
 Knelt, lay, flung wildly forward, with her face
 Pressed on the sod, one—one who could but be
 The mother.

That was Mary, that strange shape
 Of bodied anguish ; more a spirit now
 Than mortal ; not alone because her frame
 Was worn to shadow, and her weary eyes
 Seem'd wandering in another world afar :
 Whoso look'd there would see that in this world
 No part had she. 'Twas so, save when she found,
 Day after day, still sought, and daily found

As if new-made, with ever fresh despair,
That one sole spot, where *he* lay cold in earth
While spring-flowers bloom'd above him.

XXI.

“ Mary ! ” Twice,
Kneeling beside her, with the gentlest hand
On the dear head, he whisper'd, fearing much
To trust himself, his weakness, at the sound
Of the dear name, and strongly holding down
His straining heart. They rose ; she held his hands
And gaz'd, at first with vague and doubtful look,
As knowing, yet scarce knowing, whom she saw,
And trying to recall some vanish'd dream ;
Then with more earnest eyes, lit up, it seem'd,
At his, and reading his, and reading him.
Long time had he, so silent, far away,
Been claim'd from her by Heaven, and only there
Was she again to see him ; she to Heaven
Had all that hope remanded ; and to *him*,
That other, all her rest of life had given,
In *him* laid all : then Death had come, and then—
Then all was darkness : all her thoughts drawn down,
All buried, and for ever, there, in earth,
In earth, that only renders flowers for tears.

XXII.

She saw ; she knew : she from his hands unclasp'd
Hers, and outspread her arms, as to enfold
A total bliss at once ; then to her heart

Held him, and press'd to his ; then, but not soon,
 Not soon, if time be measur'd, as it is,
 By what is felt, by moments of the mind,
 Wept, as she nestled in his neck ; wept long,
 And passionately ; wept as one would weep
 Who fain would weep away her heart and life.
 But when, at length, the strong man's self grew pale
 Beneath such stress of passion, hers and his,
 She summ'd her loving spirit, staunch'd her tears,
 Smiled, very sweetly, very sadly, said,
 " But you are come—come home ;" and they went home.

XXIII.

Home ? where ? They left the grave beneath the yew :
 'Twas to their house they went.

* * * * *

And Guy took out,

So slowly, tenderly, some packages
 Of pretty things from India, packages
 Never to be unpack'd, and lock'd them up
 With little Willie's toys.

XXIV.

Faith fail'd them not : they read, they had " by heart,"
 In the true sense, what John, what Paul beheld ;
 The humble man and simple woman saw
 Almost, perhaps, as clearly in their hope
 As he in Patmos, he in Third of Heavens.
 They knew that this their world, and all its forms
 Of life and death were but a dream, to fade

In the true light ; earth, heaven to pass away,
 But not His Word ; they knew that they were souls,
 And that 'tis but Eternity which is
 The life of spirits ; and that earth and heaven
 Fail, fleet, evanish (" as a scroll," " as smoke ")
 In moments of the life of spirits : this,
 All this, they knew by heart— this and the rest.
 They knew that little Willie was in Heaven.
 But—
 They wanted little Willie in the house.
 And while they hoped and trusted Mary died.

XXV.

She died while yet the violet of the spring
 Smiled on the grave. But Guy lived on so long,
 'Twas to himself a marvel and a shame :
 So strong the man, so full of life, of soul,
 Of spirit so puissant, with a frame
 Of iron or of temper'd steel, long steep'd
 In trial, that his grief, and even his will
 (His one will was to die) scarce overcame
 His scorn'd and hated mortal part, that still
 Lagg'd slow behind them who were gone so long.
 His " quantity of love " and grief—his love
 The measure of his anguish—would have killed
 Ten common men. This man, had he lain deep
 In dungeon, chain'd and famish'd twenty years,
 Would never once have cower'd, not once have ceas'd
 To strive in spirit and to plan escape :

He was so hard to break. And so his heart
 Broke not as yet ; or, if it broke and died
 Within him, some yet unquench'd fire of youth,
 The vigour of his vivid animal life,
 Upbore, onbore him yet a while, albeit
 He seem'd to bend his mind, with all its force,
 All stress of will, against his bodily part,
 And bade it crush the life out. Still he lived ;
 But he would die. It might be sin ; it might
 Be, as sin is, self's vain revolt from God,
 Still and for ever, self-aveng'd on self.
 Death, self-decreed, might be but this despair
 Still darker, lonelier, longer, in the grave.
 He knew not ; he would try ; he would trust God.
 God knew that he had borne enough ; God knew
 That he could bear no more. *They* were with God.
 Should not he seek them ?

Darker thoughts, too, passed
 Across his reeling mind.

Well, *they* were gone :
 That, that alone he knew ; and *he* would go.
 And whither ? That he reck'd not. *They* would be
 In death together. *They* were there, beneath
 The churchyard yew : he would die there, and there
 Lie—let it be for ever : let the world
 Go on, and go its way, and leave them there.

* * * * *

And now his mind was fix'd, and now grew calm,
 Grew clear, it seem'd, and brighten'd. He could see

Hope by the light of love : God's love he felt
 o fully, that he only thought of God
 As Love ; and in the light of that sweet love
 Saw things so bright before him. Brighter climes
 Than Indian isles rose, dawning, from the deep,
 From the dark deep ; and he should meet them there ;
 There, on the shore, he saw them ; he was near.

* * * * *

No page except his Bible's had he turn'd
 Since, while on board, up Channel, he had conn'd
 His second Bible, Shakspeare, but he there
 Had read (remember'd now, and resonant),
 —“ My dreams presage some joyful news at hand :
 “ My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne.
 “ I dreamt my lady came, and found me dead,
 “ And breath'd such life with kisses in my lips,
 “ That I reviv'd and was an emperor.”

XXVI.

Night came ; and never deeper night descended
 On a lost battle-field, or on the grave
 Of love ; nor blast more savage ever raged
 Through the dense darkness, scourging the black frost
 Into still keener bite, than when Guy Grey
 Lay down to die, among the dead spring-flowers :
 There, in the deadly gloom of that last night
 Of that cold world, with summer in his heart ;
 For he should soon sleep well, and then should wake,
 With them, among the starry asphodel
 And amaranth hues of heaven. Perhaps his mind,

Worn, waste, was wilder'd, but his will was fix'd.
 Slow hours he lay ; and now was little left
 Of life, or sense of suffering, sense of aught,
 Till something touch'd his hands, then touch'd his face,
 Then, humbly, it might seem, and lovingly,
 Came close : t'was Bly, his dog (her name was " Blithe "—
 Most beauteous of the collie kind, and best).
 Bly, too, had there lain long : he knew it not.
 Bly, trembling, quivering, gently pull'd his sleeve,
 And well he knew she whin'd, " Come, come away ;
 Come home ;" and half his dying heart went out
 Tow'rds that last friend on earth ; and half he will'd
 Then to resign his own desir'd near death,
 And to take home that night the poor starv'd dog.
 But, no. They wait him : he would die that night.
 And so—but let that pass—and then he died.

XXVII.

Day : the dog watch'd the dead.
 Which when the Vicar from his chamber saw,
 And saw anon (not hurrying, for 'twas but
 A dead man, or a drunken, and a dog,
 And breakfast waited) that the man was Grey,
 Words fail'd his sacerdotal scorn and ire.
 And when some, pitying, breath'd the thought, the fear,
 That the poor dead had died because his heart
 Had long been buried with his own lov'd dead,
 And life a burden more than he could bear,
 'Twas overmuch, and all the priest o'erflow'd.

"Die like a dog ! and die in my churchyard !
 And with a dog, a heathen's heathen dog,
 In his last hour ! and this in my churchyard !
 He wants to rest with them ? That shall he not.
 A suicide, a felon, he shall lie
 At the cross-roads, sir ; not in my churchyard.
 He shall be buried like a dog, by night
 (He liked to die at night—eh, Dan ! " but Dan,
 For once, scarce smiled his duty at the wit).
 " By midnight, with no service—not one word—
 I'll go to bed—and with a good sharp stake
 Driven through his harden'd heart." (It happen'd, though,
 That the good Vicar err'd : a jury sat
 More merciful than he ; and Guy was laid
 There where he will'd ; and man not Reverend less,
 A meek grey curate, with a heart and head,
 Breath'd blessing on his grave : Archdeacon Fuff
 Was busy at Sir Bingo's, plying hard
 For more preferment ; mean and servile there,
 Of course, as elsewhere harsh and arrogant).
 " And this starv'd cur, that cowers and cringes so "
 (Kicks Bly)—" I won't have dogs in my churchyard."
 (The Vicar's cow graz'd there ; the Vicar's pigs
 Disported at their own sweet will ; and sheep
 Were pastur'd, and were paid for ; dogs no good
 In his churchyard.) " I won't have dogs, I say,
 In my churchyard. Don't let that dog sneak out.
 Here, Daniel, get a rope, and hang that dog,
 There, on that yew-tree, just above that grave."

XXVIII.

Thing easier said than done. John Jones was there.
 John Jones heard "hang that dog." John Jones blasphem'd.
 He swore an oath so large, so round, so full,
 That if Recording Angel minded were
 To blot it out, much need that he should drop
 Tears ponderous as "the biggest gooseberry"—
 Swore (*heu et proh!*) beneath the very shade
 Of Church, and of the Vicar's sacred nose;
 Who, meek, good man, how scandaliz'd soe'er,
 Put up a prayer; said "God forgive him!"—prayer
 So breath'd, so snarl'd, that 'twas the bitterer curse.
 John Jones? We have heard the name; but who was
 he?

The parish doctor. Worthier fellow ne'er
 Rode hard through midnight storm to poorest cot
 For slenderest fee, or certainty of none.
 No stauncher ever laugh'd a loud, rude laugh,
 Or swore a sound old oath, or drain'd a pot
 Down to its deepest drop; or lov'd to stroke
 A kitten, or to baste a raging bull.
 Big, burly, rough as a rugged'st Russian bear,
 Yet with a hand, a touch, as nice as firm,
 And with a sense of humour fine and keen
 As his best lancet, he, who, when he came
 From some child's deathbed, and sat down at home,
 Alone at last, would wipe his eyes, that then
 Own'd all his weakness, he so lov'd a joke,
 That he his foe the Vicar could have lov'd

Had that great man but made a joke, though bad
 As his best sermon ; and 'twas told that he,
 Much to the scandal of the good, had joked
 A dying sinner, cramm'd with dire despair,
 Out of all dread of Bogy, sent him down
 Half chuckling at the doctor's last good thing ;
 And that (but this was unconfirm'd, and pass'd,
 With some, for simple fiction, white or black—
 " One of Archdeacon Fuft's ") a patient once
 Had died of laughter and of loss of blood
 For that the worthy surgeon, much in beer
 Had op'd an artery by mischance, and smiled
 Remarking that he was not in the vein.

XXIX.

John Jones, then, heard and saw, and swiftly strode,
 With scant obeisance, right across the path
 Of him who said " Go, hang that dog " to him
 Who went to do it. " DROP THAT DOG, DAN BLOGG,
 Or I'll drop *you*." Dan made his choice, and dropp'd
 The dog ; but well-nigh dropped himself, beneath
 The glaring wrath of master there, drawn up
 Swoln into twice a Dean with noble rage,
 Amazement, indignation, stung, still worse,
 With some vile sense of impotence absurd
 (" So as a painted tyrant Pyrrhus stood,
 " And like a neutral to his will and matter,
 " Did nothing.")

He, this parish Caiaphas,

Being High-Priest, could prophesy, and so
 Foreknew, within his own prophetic soul,
 Foresaw that ev'n his sacred self (great God !),
 His own great self, to that irreverent man,
 That coarse John Jones, hot-headed Welshman, might,
 And more than might, be but as Daniel Blogg.
 Let *him*, John Jones, go hang, and take the dog.

XXX.

He took her home, and kept her at his side.
 One night (a sudden summons to a friend
 Far off' arous'd him) Bly broke quick away ;
 And when, returning, forty weary miles
 Of heavy snow twice travell'd, he, by light
 Of the late-setting moon, explor'd the spot,
 The dog lay dead upon the grave.

XXXI.

“ That dog
 Shall lie beneath that yew-tree ; that dear dog
 Shall rest with him that was so dear.” So said
 John Jones, irreverent ; and he kept his word.
 If he had said, “ Archdeacon Fuff shall eat
 That dog,” he would have kept it : 'twas his way.

XXXII.

A little girl died of a rare disease
 Of interest deep and high to men of lore,
 To Science, to Humanity. 'Twas then
 No very mighty matter just to take,

Nay, nor to "snatch," a body, for the good
 Of Science and Humanity—so thought
 The learned, and the curious, and the rest.
 Ev'n students medical, for love of lore,
 And love of fun and guineas, tried their hands,
 And won applause for pretty little pranks
 Ev'n in the graveyards. So, John Jones, one night
 (Not hard for him, the doctor and the friend),
 The precious "subject" to secure contriv'd,
 And left poor Bly, in lead and woollen lapp'd,
 The substitute (and saw the lid screw'd down),
 And follow'd to the grave beneath the yew.
 The Vicar read—" *Man that is born*" . . . (John Jones
 Stood by) . . . " *the soul of our dear sister here*" . . .
 . . . " *In sure and certain hope*" " *of Thine*
elect"
 The mourners wept, their well-mopp'd faces bow'd,
 And the good doctor hid his own—his frame,
 The crowd saw pitying, shaken as he sobb'd.

XXXIII.

And the good Vicar left poor Bly to rest
 Fast by the lowly grave of those that lov'd,
 And love, we think, for ever. Do we think
 Love ever faileth? Do we think that earth
 Has any spot too sacred for the heart,
 Or for one humbler fellow-creature's love?
 "Lo! the poor Indian . . . in that equal sky
 "His faithful dog shall bear him company."

MIDNIGHT ; MIDWINTER :

A STRAY CAT MEWING AT MY DOOR IN THE TEMPLE.

Οἴδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις συσπενδύζει καὶ συνωδεῖναι ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν.
—Rom. viii., 22.

“ Taught by the Power that pities me,
I learn to pity them.”—GOLDSMITH.

——“ I would also deem
That goodness is no name, and happiness no dream.”—BYRON.

“ Although a subtler sphinx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.”—SHELLEY.

I.

The mystic midnight of the world of man,
The dawn still far away, the stars of morn
Still unawaking, sunk in pierceless gloom——

II.

Fain would I find within my wildered thought
Some guiding gleam, relumed as consciousness
Gains re-possession, in reviving sense
Of that perpetual Presence, which to all
Who own it as the heart may learn to own,
Is light, and universal light would be
Though all the suns vanished as a spark.

III.

Fain would I staunch the surging doubts that wake
 Like midnight fears, and throb against my heart,
 That tries to arm it* and repel the tide.
 Fain would I stem the darkness of the hour,
 Thus haunted by the foe, whose hour it is,†
 Fain rest in loving faith, and wait the light.

IV.

But dark to me, and darker (nor alone
 In this dark, lonely hour of night, but oft
 In garish, worldly day, full oft, when I
 Have brooded on my sorrows, and on theirs,
 The humble, harmless creatures, that endure
 Without the strength of reason or of hope
 Sustaining, all the ills *they* never earned,
 Cold, hunger, pain, all pains that baser man,
 Their "lord," unworthy and unjust, can wreak
 Upon their mute, meek helplessness), to me
 In many an hour, both in the world of men
 By day, and midst the worlds of God by night,
 Darker to mind, and deeper far to heart,
 That *moral* mystery of His work than aught
 That tries our *reason* in the rugged realms
 Of Scripture, science, history, whereof
 I know the mazes, rocks, and storms, and syrts,
 The depths and shallows, having long and far

* Ὁωλίζου, καρδία.—*Med.* 1242.

† Luke xxii., 53.

Sought strength and light, sought "treasure," which to
win

I staked all care and cost and hope, staked all
For truth, and won it, as I still will deem.

V.

"We see in part"—alas! how much we see
Of suffering and its mystery, which is,
Among so much, a pang the not least keen.
"We know in part"—how little do we know
Of God's great scheme! how much that mind of man
Can never, never save as evil see!
We cannot, oh! we cannot understand
How such a world of woes (not ours alone,
Which man, we hear, has merited, but theirs—
"What have they done, these sheep?"*—the things of life
That live to suffer and to die and go),
How such a world, with ceaseless anguish racked
Through ages unimaginably vast,
Can stand in His bright presence, can in Him
Live, move, and have its being. Well I know
Full many a beauteous system theorized
By seers who of the purpose saw so much
And felt so little of the pain. Full well
I know and loathe them; and full fain would frame
Some other, which should less perplex the mind,
Less vex the heart.

* 2 Sam., xxiv., 7.

Cf. Ovid. *Metam.* xv. "Quid meruistis, oves, placidum pecus?"

—————“ Shall see it, but not now.”
 Thou art so near, and yet so far away.

VI.

The Muslim worships The Most Merciful ;
 The bard of Judah sang—and echoing hearts
 Rise resonant—His mercy over all.
 But this mid-winter midnight and the woes
 That cry where none but kindred wretches hear,
 And none can succour, this the present world,
 That lies, this Yule, in midnight black and froze
 Where “ little ones,” God’s creatures, harmless things
 That never sinned, lie perishing—What word
 Of comfort comes ?—“ How long ? oh, Lord ! how long ?”

VII.

To whom, then, shall we turn, unless to Thee ?
 And can we but cry, “ I believe : help Thou
 Mine unbelief ?” Thou knowest. What Thou doest
 We know not now ; but Thou Thyself hast said
 That we shall know hereafter. So I gaze
 Through the black midnight and the starless gloom,
 And seek some source of light, light uncreate,
 Far, far beyond the sun, the light of love
 That yet may kindle faith ; though still, oh ! still,
 I find so much in this wide howling waste
 Too hard for reason, all too hard for heart—
 Almost for faith ; but faith, whose name is trust,
 Trust loving, generous, brave, could find no scope

If reason, bargaining for solid proof,
 Saw certitude. We strain dimmed, weary eyes
 Tow'ards where, 'tis told, all tears are wiped away.
 There must they rest ; or where ? Where, save in love ?
 Love trusts in Love ; and trust is Faith, and Faith
 Holds all our hope ; and hope may bear with life,
 And rise remanded to Redress above.

VIII.

And Love Divine has walked the world of man,
 And smiled upon "these little ones," and said
 That what we do for one "the least of these"
 Is done for Him ; that not a sparrow falls
 Unmarked of God ; that unto Him live all.

IX.

No, puss : I did not leave you at the door,
 Out in the cold, while I with blank, blank verse
 Echoed your cry, so much more mewsical.

LOVELOST.

An August sunlight slanted from the west
 Over broad, long-rang'd roofs of squares and streets
 In a far suburb—many a glittering pane
 Spangled the early evening—streaming rays
 Came smilelike through the chamber where she lay,
 That fair, pale, dying girl. Sunward she look'd
 Through the shut window : then she look'd on him
 Who sat beside her ; and she spoke : her voice—
 A sweet voice—tremulous at once and calm,
 Like many gather'd whispers summ'd to speech.

“ You must be very weary. You have now
 Sat six hours by me, six long, silent hours.
 And it must irk you : no, it irks you not,
 For you are very good ; the more that, as
 I know too well, it is not love—not love
 Such as was once our love. Oh, no ! no ! no !
 You do not love me now ; and it is long,
 Long since you could.”--“ Not love you now ?”—

“ No, not.

Ah ! what a sad, faint smile ! You have not yet
 Learnt to smile false : you shall not so for me.
 Yes, you are very good to try to seem

Still mine ; but no, my friend ! I see too well.
 We see so much, we dying ones." And then
 She smil'd, and laid a finger on his lips,
 And sadly shook her head ; and then took back
 Her finger from his lips, and then again
 There laid it, with a kiss upon it. Then
 She look'd along the sunlight to the west,
 Look'd, and lay silent : then she seem'd to sum
 Her failing spirits—summ'd herself, it seem'd,
 To some new firmness—found some inner force,
 And, after yet some musing silence, rais'd
 Her bare, bright head a little, turn'd her eyes
 Upon him, gaz'd far into his, and spoke.

" Oh that fair, distant West ! that lovely land—
 Your lovely land, and mine—yes, mine, once mine—
 Yours then and mine at once. Ah, *then* !—those times,
 Those lovers' golden days !—Do you remember ?
 You took me with you through the summer hills ;
 And I—oh, yes ! I was so happy—I
 Was well content to veil me, or to turn
 My face aside, when some I knew might see,
 And often almost well content to seem
 What—what I was, and almost unabash'd :—
 It was such pleasure, and I was so young.
 Ah ! those bright mornings—born of summer nights—
 Those ramblings by the rivers and the lakes—
 The lone, dark gorges and the loud, white falls !—
 How boldly did we press our still fresh search
 For something still more beauteous—some far nook

Of wilder, rarer charm, some secret dell,
 Some cave or chasm, or summit hid in heaven !
 You ever lov'd to seek, and so we found.
 Do you remember when we climb'd, and I
 Look'd back and shudder'd, and would yet look down
 Once more—it was so wondrous—and I then
 Grew faint and dizzy, and you bore me up
 And laid me on the moss—do you remember ? ”

And then she stopp'd, and crimson'd.—“ How I
 talk !—

I know not what ”—And then she paused some space.

“ I wish you loved me still ; I wish you could
 Love yet a little while. But 'twas enough—
 It shall be so—it will be—that you once
 Lov'd as you did—oh, yes ! you lov'd me then.
 And I——lov'd then, as now, and evermore.

'Tis meet I should. How much I owe you !—nay”—
 (For then he turn'd his head and wrung her hand)

“ Indeed I owe you much of happiness,
 And much of knowledge.” Then she sigh'd ; then said :
 “ 'Tis well to know, and what has been was well.
 And if 'twere——yes, it should be so again—
 I know it would. Why, what a peasant girl,
 A simple child, I was when first you came
 And took and taught me !—Ah ! you taught me much—
 Too much—but much of good. You brought me light,
 And made me love the light : and light is good,
 And love of light is good. You bore me up,
 And bore me on : and 'twas from you I learnt

'The love of higher things and better days':
 And if I gain them not, at least I hop'd,
 And rose in hope, and liv'd awhile in hope.

That happy time!—those hours when first I came
 Among Ravenna's pines, when first I read :

'Ah! surely nothing dies, but something mourns'
 (*Shall* something mourn?)—those hours when first I
 came

With Lambro tow'rd's his home, and stood and look'd—
 When first I watch'd Haidee, there where she lay
 When 'to the wall she turn'd, as if to warp
 Her thoughts from sorrow through her heart re-sent,'
 And where 'no dirge except the hollow sea's
 Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades'!

I wander'd with Alastor, and I sat
 By Adonais, by the graves in Rome.

I heard that 'nightingale,' that 'word' '*forlorn*.'

'Twas you that brought me through the golden gates
 Of Eden, you that ('gliding through the even,'
 Like Uriel) brought me to the moonlight glades
 When spiritual creatures walk'd the earth with song;

'Twas you that led me down the cypress walk

When lay the earth all Danaë to the stars;

And you that led me to the level lake

And the long glories of the winter moon.

You show'd me all, show'd all that I could see—

The pale, worn Dane, the royalty of Lear,

Verona, Venice, and th' enchanter's isle;

And something of the thrice great Florentine,

The love-lit voyager to the three vast spheres ;
 And something of the nobleness of Rome,
 And something of the gloriousness of Greece ;
 And all that was the true life of my life,
 And all that is my solace in my death."

Again a silence. And she laid her hand,
 And then her cheek, upon his arm ; and lay
 Long time, with drooping lashes, lips apart,
 And soft, slow breathing ; 'twas not sleep, but rest,
 Placid, but pensive : then she mov'd and spoke.

"And now"—she paused—"now teach me something more.

You know"—and then she slowly raised her head,
 And spoke with alter'd accent, very low,
 But all distinct—"They say—I heard it well,
 Last night, although they whisper'd it—they say
 That I am dying ; and 'tis true. Feel here.
 Your hand—what, lips too ?—does it throb to them ?

Now, tell me what it is to die, and how.
 I would die well. I would remember now
 (Where are they ?) those brave sayings, those great
 thoughts,

Which once I lov'd to hear and read. And now
 I much forget.—Ah ! must I die and go ?
 Oh ! whither, whither ?—Yes, I fear that now
 I almost fear. And must I not believe,
 And can I not—methinks I would and could—
 In a sweet Saviour, in his words of love—
 A Father's bosom and a heavenly home,

Rest for the weary, ransom for the lost ?

And was it all but figment, what I knew
By heart and cherish'd ?—what my childhood learnt,
Was it but childish ?—what my mother taught,
Was it but evil ?——tell me. Yes, I know—
I now remember——yes, you taught me true ;
You taught me well : you show'd me what it was,
That Book, those writings— how they grew divine
By grace of emperors, votes of Councils—how
The true Church argued and prevail'd, and how
The hydra Faith so 'stablish'd still survives,
Such as it is, and still has so much sway.

Oh ! then, what have I ?—whom on earth have I,
If none in heaven ?—whom now ?—Not you—oh, no !
You are not mine : I know it. Can I choose
But think 'twere sweet to lay me and my sins
There were the Love that fails not folds its flock ?

And I have sinn'd, and we have sinn'd : oh ! yes,
Those happy hours—and then—that, that was sin.
Why would I listen ?—ah ! those echoing words—
That ' pleasure and a dark but sweet offence '——
That ' glowing guilt exalting keen delight '——

I want my faith in One that will forgive,
My trust in a Redeemer, who to me
Would speak sweet words and bring sweet hope again.

And have you taken that too from me—that,
That too, and all ?——Forgive me. I talk wild.
I gave, and shared, and would not now recall.

But if I may not dream of love divine,

Oh ! let me dream of *thy* love. Shall I ?——no.
 And is not that, then, cruel ?——Must I die
 Unlov'd and unforgiv'n ?—Indeed it seems
 A strange, hard thing to die. How cold, how lone,
 Shall she lie there who——But the once warm breast
 May there forget its heartache, and the lips
 The kiss that died away ere she could die.

Oh ! but—to 'sleep in Jesus'——(do you know
 The stone i' the churchyard—there, beneath the elm,
 Where she, my sister, lies alone ?—those words
 Are graven there)——to sleep, to rest in God !

You ought to love me, you, who——yes, you ought.
 And yet you cannot. Yet you love——I know
 Whom : and I cannot blame you : what am I ?

And she will hear the birds and watch the flowers ;
 And she will walk among your trees with you.
 I only saw the tree-tops from far off.
 I, who——but what am I ?—I have but love.
 I have lov'd you : but my fathers long had serv'd
 And long lov'd yours : I have lov'd you long and well.
 What matter ? I should be a stranger there.

'Tis a strange world : 'tis well to leave it soon.
 'Tis a hard world. I cannot hate, but I
 Would leave it now. But whither do I go ?

Oh, yes ! you ought to be to me what now
 None other can—none other—no ! not God.

And do you tell me of some charmless name
 Of Nature, some far, actless deity,
 Some fix'd, inexorable Force or Law ?

I cannot understand it with my heart :
 And 'tis my heart that knows the need of God :
 And 'tis my heart that must receive my God.
 I want to hear of *His* love. I am now
 No stronger and no wiser than I was
 When first you found me weak and innocent.
 I am but merest woman ; and to her——
 The timid and the pious sex, to which
 The sneerer said Religion owes so much——
 Religion is much : 'tis her instinct still :
 And is not woman's instinct ever true ?

Can *you* your airy heights, that tower beyond
 All temples, hold 'gainst all the storms of life,
 'Gainst thought and sorrow ?——*you*—how will you die ?
 Ah ! not with me : she, she will live, and she
 Will die, with you : I see death may be sweet—
 Not sweet to me—nor death nor life to me,
 Poor child !—Why did you win me from my home,
 Where I was good and happy ? You knew well
 That you could never love me, or not long.

And she will die within your circling arms,
 And lie with you among your hard, high race.
 But then this heart shall be as cold as theirs.

Come nearer—and forgive me. I have said
 I know not what. What was it ?——What am I ?
 And where ?—and whither ?——I am far away,
 And it is very late. And——And my thoughts,
 And now my eyes, grow dim ; but you are here.
 Come closer . . . That is well. But closer still ;

For I must whisper . . . Do you hear me now ?

Do you remember ?——Yes, you lov'd me then.

And now——And do you ?——Yes, you love me now.

Now let me go. Why should I live again ?

We lov'd, and we love now ; and what is Death

That Love should shrink from death ?——And there
were words—

I know not where, but I have heard those words,

And hear them now . . . *This mortal shall put on*

That immortality . . . and *she lov'd much*.

And she, the lovelost, is by Love redeemed."

THE GRAVE OF BURNS.

I.

To him, to this, the true home, where he rests
 After his hard life-task, "his weary way,"
 Son of the soil—star-bright, but born of earth,
 Its lover and its poet (for he loved,
 And sang its beauty, in the free blue air,
 In the broad sunlight, and beneath the moon.
 In glade or glen), quick Nature's child, and now
 Given back to her *not* "unmaternal breast,"
 And lulled among the gracious elements,
 This sweet spring-time, and all the varied months,
 Should bring their tribute, bring to this, his grave,
 For ever green.

But if we bid sweet spring
 And sweeter summer bring their brightest bloom,
 And hues of morn and sunset, for the wreath
 To bind the brow that ached with brighter thoughts,
 Yet shall sere autumn follow, with the step
 Of one that follows what she loved and lost,
 And lay her votive tresses, as of old
 The Greek laid lovely locks, upon the tomb.
 And winter, too, must come ; for there he lies

“ In cold obstruction.”

But the winter-gloom
Shall yield that fairest, first-born flower of earth,
Whose spring-bright verdure and whose snow-bright
bloom

Gem the wild darkness of the dying year
With pledge of starry resurrection soon.

II.

Here and afar his name gleams writ in gold :
He lies in earth, but hallows all his land :
We leave “ him with his glory.” Look again :
A heavy heart lies there : he lived, he died,
A man of many sorrows, born to bear
The pains of passion and the shames of pride.
That man must sleep if he would cease to dream,
And die if he would rest : ’tis *there*—so low—
The heart that beats so high must seek its peace.
First give him tears, if you must tread his grave ;
For he was born a poet ; he was born
To the true poet’s wide inheritance
Of suffering in a cold and straitened world ;
And he was sternly cast on evil days,
Days dim and chill, where all was rude or false ;
And he was great of nature, grand in heart,
And flushed with passion like his fiery power,
And steeped in human sweetness, wasted oft
As Arab odours wafted o’er the deep,
O’er the waste waters or the darker wilds ;
And what he was, the world but little knew ;

And what he felt, the silent, searhless heart,
That knoweth its own bitterness, knew well.

III.

But he sleeps well ; and long shall thoughts of love
And fond heart-fancies tend him where he lies.
And the white moon, that beams like angel-love
From heaven, shall watch him with her heavenly smile—
The bright, sweet summer moon that smiled on youth
And truth and rapture while the lover's plea
Passed through the ripe, rich, golden, maiden heart
As passed his swift steps through the wavy corn—
The wan moon that beheld him when he gazed
Far up the skies “ to Mary,” who from earth
Had waned away, and who was his “ in Heaven,”
His, but far off in Heaven, far up the skies—
Then when all sense of earth or Heaven was lost
In mortal anguish, all save love : all sunk
And quenched that poet-spirit bright and keen
Whose strains so oft have gladdened, quickened, fired
Leal hearts and busy brains in far-off lands—
Wing'd words sown wide as Britain's spark-like seed
Beyond the waters—all forgotten then
By Mary's grave ; forgotten e'en the scorn,
Aye unforgotten by the spite of cant,
The scorn for all that, strong in strength of eld,
Stood, spectral-sham, meet mark for poet's mirth,
Stood, solemn lie, between mankind and Heaven,
Between man's conscience and a God of Love.

IV.

Yes ! he sleeps well in earth as e'er he slept
 Embowered in summer dreams of happy love.
 He lies in earth ; but 'tis his shrine : he lies
 Lapp'd in the starry darkness, with his fame
 Gathered about him like a purple robe
 Thick-sown with gold. He sleeps, but all night long
 His song flows on, along the listening world,
 And echoing hearts keep watch in either sphere.
 And knows he not, and knew he not in life,
 And felt he not, at least in prescient death,
 Some portion of the inborn destiny
 Of that which was not mortal, that which lives
 Among us yet, and is himself indeed ?
 Has not he now some placid consciousness,
 Which soothes, but stirs him not, of what he is
 In this his better, this his truer life —
 Of influences sweet, of lovely lays,
 Perhaps like music heard in summer night
 Far off, or spirits floating in the air—
 Of fiery thoughts sublimed to subtle flame,
 And passionate zeal for freedom, truth, and right,
 Achieving the fruition in its day ?

V.

We will believe it : we will dream that he,
 The buried, lies not lone and dreamless there
 Where men laid what was man. The poet sleeps,
 But not in darkness, not unvisited

By bright ones from his own far native land.
 And his, who loved so well all lovely things,
 Are things of beauty, things of glory, yet—
 Some still sweet sense of flowers of spring above,
 Of soaring song effused through wide blue air ;
 And fairer still and brighter—fair and bright
 As poet's dream of golden days of love,
 As visions of the happy after-time
 When poet-thought, with Macedonian march
 Shall gain its utmost Ind, that Future far,
 The life-to-come of poets, sought through death,
 The kingdom that they conquer for their race,
 Who follow, dazed and blind, the sword of fire—
 The Land of Promise, rather, which he sees
 In the dim distance, blended with the blue,
 In the bright Orient, and beholding, dies.
 He dies upon his height, and leaves his bones
 Among us : be they as the talisman*
 Which the doomed Theban gave, when to the earth
 He went so weary : be they pledge of peace,
 True peace, sure pledge of victory in the grave.

VI.

Pilgrims, from far-off realms, we humbly stand
 Beside the lowly, lofty poet's grave.
 What if of that dark tomb his darkened life
 Was the low, frowning portal ?

Let us rise.

*Soph. *Œd. C.*

Look we far forward, through the cloudland waste,
 Tinged with bright fancies, lit by poet-fire,
 Up to the soaring heights of Morning-Land,
 Land of high truths, truths human and divine,
 Touched first, and first revealed, by poet-light,
 Seen first below as visions, ere we own
 The poet's priesthood and his Day-god's glow.
 There, in that light, should we the poet seek ;
 There the true poet should be seen at last ;
 There, in that highland of the dawn, the dawn
 Of glorious Truth and love like poet's love,
 There should he sit, our laurels at his feet ;
 And there should beaming Beauty smile his meed,
 And consecrate and crown th' heroic brow :
 There the true poet's true apotheosis :
 Long time, perchance, a fancy wild as dreams,
 But bright as dream poetic, bright as hope,
 And sure as Science on her star-strewn path ;
 And, to the steadfast heart, assured as Faith,
 As faith in man's great future and in God.

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TAY BRIDGE.

DECEMBER, 1879.

The winter night, the stern, sepulchral gloom,
 The savage blast, the crash, the terror, all
 Will pass away, and spring and summer come,
 On soft wings, with the sweet South's dying fall;
 And calm and beauty and delight shall be
 Sought, found, among the mountains and the sea.

Then sobs shall cease, and tears be staunch'd, and then
 The sorrows for the lost shall silent dwell;
 And broken hearts shall be at rest again,
 If in the green and quiet earth, 'tis well.
 And then no more shall dying words be breath'd
 Such as those hearts to heartless ones bequeath'd.

What words? Perchance such murmurs as invoke
 Stern judgment on the Corporate Unhung,
 On homicidal thrift that never woke
 To sense of guilt till sense of cost was stung;
 On giddy recklessness, on lack of skill,
 On lack of thought, "sae sib" to evil will.

Those sobs, those tears, those silent broken hearts,
 Those utterances of anguish and despair,
 May pass, and vanish all, as life departs,
 And leave no mark behind, no deeper care
 Than on the thrifty souls, the giddy brain,
 That mourn the reckonings which for them remain.

And the fair flow of Tay shall meet again
 Fair scenes, and happy looks, and mirror true
 In smiles ; and, if perchance remember'd then,
 The deadly blast that dire December blew,
 Shall be but as a rippling thought among
 Light fancies, bright, serene, that glide like song.

And statelier, stronger, nobler arches there
 May span the summer sea's slow-wandering wave,
 And few recall the rush like dark despair
 Into the howling jaws of that deep grave,
 Into the stormy water where they rest,
 The lost—*not* lost, lull'd on the Loving's breast.

Nor lost the moral, if we watch and wait ;
 Nor if we scoff, nor if unconscious be.
 What moral here ? *Not* that blind chance or fate,
 Or others' sin, *their* doom by dark decree,
 Whelm'd those poor lost ones in the flood—we know
Who warn'd us not to judge disaster so—

Still less, if less might be, that aught was there
 Of that harsh "judgment" on the hapless few
 Which issues, as hyæna from its lair,

From the dull brain and darker heart that, through
 The storm of woe and horror, dron'd and yell'd,
 And Sawbath wrack with gloating eyes beheld.

Blind Pharisees ! "fou" leaders of the blind—

Let them pour forth, and flock and herd imbibe,
 And, in the demonolatry they find

The true religion of their hearts, ascribe
 Man's wrath, caprice, injustice to the God
 Who brought true Sabbath to the world He trod,

And clear proclaim'd, "Man not for Sabbath made,
 But Sabbath made for man ;" and sternly said,
 "Judge not ; condemn not." Moral ? Theirs be laid
 Among the limbo of their dogmas dead,
 Or where their Calvin's fancy lov'd to dwell,
 With infants crawling on the floor of hell.

Our moral this, that though the gracious Power

"Which wields the world with never-wearied love,"
 And weaves the stars in cycles, and the flower

That bends beneath the bee, the Power above,
 Below, around,—though He, for complex cause
 Far, far beyond us, order all by laws,

And now controls, now not arrests, the course
 Of law-shaped causes, He to final good
 Shapes all, in fittest mode ; with subtle force
 Unseen ; and so, while we, thus darkling, brood
 On chance and change, evokes from folly, guilt,
 Disaster, misery, from the blood so spilt,

Evokes the moral which His prescience wrought
 Among His viewless web of things decreed,
 And which now grows and fructifies in thought,
 And acts, in fertile thought and honest deed,
 In better rule and care and works, when we
 See “judgments” *where* and *as* we ought to see.

FRAGMENT.

GREECE AND ROME.

To wing yon heights, so distant now and dim—
 Ionian epos, Victory's soaring Hymn ;
 To share the loftier life in that weird wild
 Of crags by Titan Æschylus up-pil'd—
 The vision where he saw her wild and pale,
 And heard Cassandra pour her wondrous wail—
 To render forth from all those ages gone
 Thoughts, things, by quest, by intuition won—

The glow, the rush, the light of form and face,
 And all the stately, all the lovely grace—
 That early strain (gone back to Gods so long)
 Of Hellas in the sweet spring-time of song—
 That dying fall, those fire-writ Sapphic sighs—
 The dark, soft fire of Sappho's languid eyes—
 The tones of all that thoughts or hearts dictate,
 The thunderbolt iambics' volley'd weight—
 The death-doom'd Spartan's silent, steadfast pride,
 Who kept the straits of Œta and who died ;
 The Roman's heart at Zama, ranks outdrawn,
 The Roman Otho's in the lone, dim dawn*—
 The empire spread from Mona to the Morn,
 The boundless spirit of Olympus born.†

* * * * *

FRAGMENT.

HILLS AND STREAMS.

" Hills beyond Pentland ! " rise in starrier blue.
 " Streams beyond Forth ! " your purer waters flow
 " With a sweet inland murmur ; " and I hear.
 Waters of Israel ! weary I return
 From rivers of Damascus.

* * * * *

* " Luce primâ. " — Tacit. *Hist.* ii. 49.

† " Imperium terris, animos æquabit Olympo. "

" Genus qui ducis Olympo. "

THE KILKENNY CATS.

KILKENNY ELECTON, DECEMBER, 1890.

Cats of Kilkenny ! blessings on your heads,
 And tails ! and double on your teeth and claws !
 Bethink ye of the time when on the leads
 Historic felines (then, as now, the “ cause ”

Was, doubtless, that “ teterrima ”) discussed
 The question so exhaustively that morn
 Found nothing (if an Irish tale we trust ;
 Which who but would ?)—found on the field forlorn

Of glorious strife, no sign at all, at all,
 Of either warrior-puss, save two poor tails,
 And one poor whiff of “ flue ” (’tis so they call
 What *we* call *fur*. Sure, some strange, *mingled* wails

Were heard that night !

Kilkenny Cats of War !

Your high, your grand traditions well ye know.
 Scratch up to them ! We, like our favourite tar,
 Expect each cat to do his duty so.

THE END.



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